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INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

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**No 25**

**Adult  
Education Groups  
and Audio-visual  
Techniques**

7/1/51

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# **Adult Education Groups and Audio-visual Techniques**

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present Manual has been compiled to help education groups solve the problems arising, day-to-day work, from the ever-growing use of audio-visual media. However, these media are only aids and it is essential that their use be tied to group work in general, the problems raised being inseparable from the broader context involved in the work of the group itself: the media used, the personality of the organisers, discussion techniques and so on. The lack has been felt in many countries of any study

fixing the general background against which audio-visual media would have to be used. Such a study should have two essential objects: firstly to provide guidance for all who have to deal with education groups; and secondly to encourage groups to make more use of audio-visual

The Manual therefore first attempts to analyse the practical problems facing all who are engaged in work of this kind in every land and in

the most varied types of environment, like as leaders of study circles or as organisers of groups for the collective study of specific community problems. The chapters on instruments of work makes a special study of the educational needs of a category of person whose numbers are constantly increasing: the users of the mass information and entertainment media which have been an outgrowth of modern communication techniques which enable them and thanks to which these users are able to plan their activities more effectively directing them towards educational goals.

It was thought advisable to preface the successive chapters on group life, group implements, group discussion and the checking of results by a more theoretical kind of exposition, recapitulating the main lines and forms of adult education methods as they are now crystallising on the basis of convergent experiments throughout the world.



## A PEDAGOGICAL METHOD FOR ADULTS

The necessity or at least the usefulness of a system of pedagogical methods specially designed for adults has only lately been felt, and is still very far from being generally accepted. It is even not unusual to come across a school or university teacher who refuses to agree that there is here any problem at all. "Where is the difficulty?" they argue. Our methods have been tried and tested, we have been teaching students for generations and know exactly how to go about it. Men are not built on different patterns and what is good for our future young intellectuals is bound to be good for the new public which may be placed in our hands.

The principle behind such sentiments is a fine and worthy one. But it reflects the traditional humanistic concept framed and defined in Europe during the Renaissance, the 17th century and the Age of Enlightenment, of men as reasoning beings always and everywhere equal.

Regardless of its origin, this concept calling for an ideal concept which, today, is spread far beyond the territory of the continent which gave it birth.

This abstract and theoretical ideal, on which repeated attempts at adult education have been based, has been sadly battered by the facts. Except in a handful of favoured countries, the history of the past 50 years is marked by a whole series of failures and setbacks in the effort to provide an adult education system harmonizing with needs of modern society. One has only to recall the bitter experience of the People's Universities, whose public following petered out after a few years of high hopes, or the officers in charge of workers' educational associations who find themselves moved to deplore the pathy of those, in principle, in most need of education, namely the working masses, as shown by the constant fall in the proportion of workers taking part in educational programmes. In many of the countries now being developed, including some which have to put forth the greatest efforts in order to reach the technical and skill level incumbent upon a modern State, adult education makes little headway with the masses, often preferring to copy school teaching methods and cater for sections of the population which have already had at least a partial secondary education.

The sole way of accounting for this situation would be to blame it on the adult public's

indifference and aloofness, but the more reasonable and at the same time profitable course would be to make a constructive criticism of the methods used and to consider whether the general problem of adult education should not in fact be studied from the standpoint of methodology. Many adult education movements today assign a prime place to research and experimental work with a view to evolving an effective system of pedagogics for adults. Some of them even make this their principal concern. The main conclusions reached in this field are set forth in the following pages, but first it is necessary, since the present object is to formulate a pedagogical system based on different principles, to call attention to the psychological characteristics and individual and group behaviour patterns which distinguish the adult student from the child or adolescent as an educative subject and object. The term itself, adult student, must be clearly understood, throughout what follows, as applying to anyone participating in one of school cultural activities with a view to enlarging his store of knowledge and equipping himself to cope more effectively with his problems as an individual and a member of society. In the same way the term adult is applied to anyone who has left school and is already engaged in economic and social activity. Generally speaking, persons in this category will have completed their physical growth or are in process of doing so.

## THE ADULT STUDENT

The prime concern of the educator responsible for devising adult training and teaching methods should be to take account of the living conditions, psychological and affective reaction and social position of his charges. The decisive fact he must always bear in mind is that most of these men and women are students with a smaller capacity of concentration than ordinary students or schoolchildren.

The first and obvious reason for this is fatigue. Except in very rare cases, most adult teaching or training takes place in the evening. The work which has kept eight hours in the workshop or office plus travel time cannot possibly be expected to be as receptive as the student is able to devote himself practically to study. How often does not the tact



instructor find that part of his adult class has dozed off. His attention having relaxed after a few minutes of concentration?

And physical and mental fatigue is reinforced by another factor which impels the student a mental receptivity what may be termed the burden of existence. The child or the adolescent engaged in further study is captured, gripped and even absorbed by his school environment of which mental activity is the mainspring. It carries him along and sustains him in his progress towards learning. For the adult on the other hand the transition from the world of labour family or social life to that of study is a tremendous strain, and sometimes even, a violent wrench.

This situation makes it essential to find forms of instruction and types of curriculum which take account of the concentration capacity of the adult public and build a bridge between the two worlds of life and study.

The adult student also differs from the school child or university student in that his studies are voluntary. Nothing neither the law nor parental authority obliges him to attend evening classes. People at Universities or Workers' Colleges save his own freely made decision, which he can reverse at any moment. Unfortunately in the view of certain educators who are appalled at the regularly shrinking attendances at their classes and other activities to which the students had flocked in droves at the beginning of the year.

We are thus led to conclude that the average adult is by no means ready to recognize and appreciate the value and reward of culture for its own sake in isolation from the tasks and purposes of everyday life. Like all humans he at times looks for ways of escaping, through the imagination, from a world which does not necessarily match his dreams and aspirations. But to make a lasting effort he needs an adequate stimulus.

With the child, the connexion between what he is taught and his personal interests is in most cases not immediately apparent to him. With the adult student on the other hand, it is quite different. He is immediately aware of the benefit he can expect to derive from the work and effort required of him. It is all very well for theorists and tall men to consider it essential for a country's adult population to be able to read and write, but an illiterate peasant will only decide to follow a course of instruction if he can see what personal benefit and profit he can get from it.

While the adult student is usually less well prepared than the young one for intellectual activity as such, and while he is less well equipped or trained for the intensive and persistent pursuit of intellectual work, the fact that he necessarily has a greater wealth of experience is on the other hand, a point in his favour. He already has a history. He has "lived" and has an unending series of struggles, successes and failures, joy and sorrows to look back to. This

is particularly true of our own time when so many adults have been removed from one end of their country their continent or even the world itself to the other. How many are there not, today who have their own special geography their own sociology and philosophy based on their reflections on what they have lived through!

The adult is also rich in his potentiality and capacity for development. Without claiming that everyone is capable of producing a masterpiece we can be certain that every human being conceals a poet, a musician, a philosopher or an inventor who has lacked the opportunity or environmental conditions necessary to enable him to give free rein to his inspiration and find the right form of expression for his feeling, imagination and understanding. How many cases of neurosis or of desperate plunges into adventure or alcoholism have not their causes in the boredom felt by men unable to fulfil themselves and carry out their vocation.

One final point the adult who has decided to complete his education is usually a person who knows his own mind and wants to be regarded and treated as the adult that he is. He will agree to go back to his studies and, what is more, persevere in them, only if he is treated as an adult in other words as a responsible person whose opinions and feeling count and who does not feel humiliated or belittled in his self-esteem.

## SOCIOLOGY OF THE ADULT STUDENT

With children, difference in social origin though not of course a negligible factor from the educational standpoint are off set by the existence of a strongly unified and largely homogeneous environment the school and within it the class. School work is a powerful instrument for aggregation and equalisation; in the schoolroom distinctions and the attribution of inferiority or superiority are no longer based on the degree of wealth or social status of the family but on the balanced interplay of capacity, zeal and work.

The position in an adult group is in striking contrast. Except in rare cases the environment is heterogeneous. Each individual attending a course or club while possessing a separate personality represents an environment or group of which he is often an expression, even if he does not identify himself with it. He has an occupation, a certain pattern of social relations and a certain level of responsibility. There are also age differences and it is quite frequent for groups to be attended by men and women together.

This diversity has both a positive and a negative side. On the one hand it seriously complicates the organization of regular activities, for it is not easy to present problems in a manner capable of interesting the whole class. A particular approach to the examination of a question or a particular form of exposition or type of address

may be well suited to part of the students but remain unassimilable by the rest. There are also terminological difficulties. Every environment and social group has its own more or less abstruse vocabulary and even its own syntax. A specific type of reference may be meaningful to office workers for instance but completely pointless to factory workers.

At the same time however it is this very diversity and wealth of often complementary experience which gives adult education work its singular richness and even, originality. Not only has fresh knowledge to be imparted to the students but equally their largely chaotic experience of life has to be disentangled and a channel of communication established with an exchange of the cultural resources which, sometimes quite unknown to themselves, they all possess.

## ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE EDUCATOR

The net effect of all these psychological and sociological factors is to make the adult education worker's qualifications, mission and tasks basically different from those of the traditional type of teacher evolved by centuries of school teaching. He retains of course his educational rôle as such. In principle his knowledge is better organised and more systematic than that of his pupils: he has read and studied; he is used to handling educational material and he is expected to be able to pass on to others the cultural wealth to which he holds the key. But this function of actually transmitting knowledge is only part of his task, and perhaps the least important part. Viewed from the general standpoint of adult education, teaching is only a momentary phase in an aspect of an integral educational process in which the group is the main agent. It is the group in action which transmits the power and drive necessary to produce the desired changes and advancement: moral and social as well as intellectual in its individual members.

The educator, be he professional or voluntary, places himself at the service of the group, of which he forms part and parcel. His effectiveness in fact, depends on the members' acceptance of him not as a foreign element but as an associate in life and work, sharing in large measure their problems, cares and aspirations. It is more important for him to heed and observe than to talk and discourse. In many cases he has everything to learn, in a manner which will be most useful to him, from the way his associates express their thoughts and feelings. The life of adult workers is often a strange and complex world to him and he must pierce its secrets. Conversely his most effective action, timid and again will be to help the students in their difficult task of perceiving their ideas and giving form to the often fumbling expression of their personality.

Thus the educator's rôle is predominantly a moral one. It has to give unflinching support to the efforts of men and women who are easily disheartened by the snares and obstacles besetting the path they have taken and who need constant encouragement to keep them going. They have to be stimulated by confidence shown in them by someone intellectually their senior who may well have had personal experience of the same sort of difficulty for often enough the educator himself comes from the ranks of the people and knows what results to expect and how much application and perseverance is called for. It is in this task of providing encouragement surely that the greatness and significance of the adult education worker's vocation lies. Vocation, sad to say not recognised in most countries as the important profession it is, as a means of livelihood to which the educator can devote himself full time!

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF A PEDAGOGICAL METHOD FOR ADULTS

Pedagogics as progressively applied during the past fifty years have tried to make allowance for the characteristics of adult students and the educator's special position under the adult education system. The result, of course, has been a patchwork of ancient and traditional forms of the scholastic type existing side by side in the same locality and even in the same institutions with bold innovations. Adult education, of course, is still evolving and has a long way to go before it achieves a final form having anything like universal validity. Lastly, and this applies to it even more than to ordinary school teaching, owing to its closeness to everyday life, it assumes different forms in different countries reflecting local historical processes and social and cultural conditions. We shall therefore confine our lives in these introductory pages to indicating its main lines of development.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH LIFE

The relationship between study and research on the one hand, and concrete experience on the other is direct and obvious. Except in rare cases as we have seen, the adult is not prepared to spare the necessary time from his leisure hours in order to acquire education and culture unless he can see how it will help him solve his main problems. For instance, how can he improve his existence materially and morally? How can he organize his life and work more efficiently? How can he obtain a clearer insight into the complexity of the universe? How can order and clarity be brought into the jumble of conflicting ideas and piecemeal information existing in his mind? Is it possible to introduce consistency into his thoughts? How can he grasp something of the mystery of the universe and become a more

alert and effective citizen, a better father a more able worker? How can he become more useful to himself and to others? How can he gain in wisdom and achieve greater control over his actions, thoughts and feelings?

The educator when seeking to give an ordered account of any aspect of human achievement or learning whether it be a book, a philosophy or an economic thesis or a scientific discovery will do well to pay close heed to these innumerable questions which the adult expects the world to answer.

## MOTIVES FOR STUDY

The problem of attracting adults to courses or study groups and getting them to continue to attend involves far more than methods or pedagogical principles. One of the basic factors is social climate which is changeable. There are periods of political enthusiasm and social progress which bring with them a general rush to acquire learning. Conversely there is pessimism which comes with social setbacks and disappointments often expresses itself in a sceptical approach towards educational work. Despite all this however the necessity remains from the strictly pedagogical standpoint of providing motives for study in order to keep the programmes going.

The educator must familiarise himself with the aspirations of the groups and individuals in his charge. Where necessary he must help adults to become more alive to cultural needs of which they were previously only dimly aware. These needs and aspirations will differ very widely of course and it would be risky to lay down rules or priorities in this connexion. In some cases the motives will be essentially economic as with a region or village which has been hard hit by unemployment. In such places the educator would be ill advised to lead off his educational work with a course on great authors of world literature although a study of them might fittingly be included at a later stage. He would have to concentrate in his course his lessons on his talks at least in the initial stage on methods of combating unemployment. It would also have to deal with occupational training or where appropriate with the preparation of prospective migrant for life in the new home. Where there is relative prosperity on the other hand, action to relieve the boredom of provincial life and the monotony of everyday existence may be a very powerful factor making for cultural stimulation.

It is impossible to over-stress the importance of psychological factors such as compensation for an inferiority complex. Certain milieus and situations encourage the desire to "cut a fine figure" and compel recognition and the acquisition of stature in one's superiority and prestige.

A desire to increase one's knowledge and so escape from the stigma of ignorance may be a very potent factor.

At the same time selfish motives though powerful, are far from being the only ones. Many people feel a need to make themselves useful, to dedicate themselves and to serve their community as heads of families, members of political parties or active social workers. Their educational needs are infinite and their desire to serve is an important instrument in the hands of the educator. Again there is the human need for recreation and escape. Only when adult education loses the grim aspect which has all too often characterised society's educational activities and comes to represent a living experience at least as agreeable and attractive as the relaxations in which adults try to forget their cares and disappointments will it strike deep roots as part of the general pattern of living and become in the public eye an essential community service.

## INTEGRAL EDUCATION

Adult education is tending nowadays to be less and less concerned with differences between the various branches of learning. Like life which knows only complex situations where events belong simultaneously to history, geography, natural science, statistics and so on, educational work makes multiple use of the techniques devised to render the world intelligible and to influence it. The question is not much to teach adults history, sociology or some other subject as to use the data and results of these disciplines for the purpose of elucidating or explaining situations which are part and parcel of the lives of the men and women students concerned. They will then find it much easier to follow the paths that lead often by devious turns to the elements of the branches of learning accessible to them. Learning, in adult education, involves less an end in itself than it is in the schoolroom. It is rather a means to an end, an aid to living.

## INFORMAL EDUCATION

The primary school provides a certain type of education known as school education. In the same way secondary schools, colleges and universities provide secondary and higher education. They are formal institutions in the sense that with them the curricula, methods and standards of instruction, teaching qualifications and types of examinations and certificates are more or less codified and in many cases even regulated by law. Adult education is self-directed. It does not have to bother about certificates and examinations which always bedevil even the best concerted attempts to improve the traditional forms of instruction. There is no outside

recognition of the success of the adult student-pedagogics for adults know no reward or penalty other than the satisfaction felt by the individual or group at having acquired learning and made headway or the painful sense of having failed in a difficult undertaking. Hence they are not tied to any specific standard or procedure: the sole criterion of the value of the programmes and methods used is the change they bring about in group attitudes and behaviour patterns and the fact that change is often a long term process makes it particularly difficult to check the concrete results a matter which is the subject of the concluding chapter of this Manual.

Thus every circumstance and facet of life can be regarded as the springboard, setting or subject for a manifestation of educational activity whether it be the practice of a trade, the execution of an order, responsibility for a family participation in trade union or tenants' association work, membership of a sports club, or regular attendance at theatres, cinemas and concerts.

In the same way all techniques find their due place in this activity without it being desirable or even possible to work out any order of priority other than that based on usefulness and efficiency. For example, courses and lectures are an excellent method of ensuring the rapid and comprehensive dissemination of a body of concepts and facts among a public conditioned to receive them, but their purely educational effect is limited. Where a more radical effect is sought, with consequent changes in behaviour patterns, for instance, group activities are obviously indicated with skillful use of the various discussion techniques involving the participation of each member.

Mass and industrial information and entertainment media such as film, radio and television, from which harmful effects are feared in so far as they tend to develop a receptive and passive attitude among the users, are likewise transformed into excellent instruments, not merely for the obvious purpose of information, but also for instruction, once it is known how to use them for educational ends and in an educational context. (One chapter of this Manual deals specifically with this aspect of pedagogics for adults.)

## FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION

For educational work to have point, most of the adult students must be conscious of the usefulness of the activities suggested to them. If that usefulness is not immediately apparent, or is indirect, too remote, they are either not attracted or they lose heart and interest. The most convenient and natural way of linking their work to the problem of life is in basic educational activity on the tasks, responsibilities and place in society of each individual. Each one of them has personal experience of his shortcomings

vis à vis the professional, economic and social tasks facing him, once he realises that, by engaging in intellectual work within his range of ability, he will become more efficient and feel less crushed by the weight of his responsibilities. His resistance to educational activity will to that extent be reduced, and he will be sustained in his efforts by a powerful set of motives. And what is true for the individual applies also of course to groups which will be able, through learning together, to exert together their influence on the moral and material conditions of their milieu.

The educator's task is to organize the material and the knowledge he has to communicate in such a way as to meet the adult student's desires in that connexion. With very few exceptions what they want is not to be taught the whole of science but to get on familiar terms with scientific questions having a direct bearing on their particular problems. This naturally makes it the educator's business to ascertain or visualise what his pupils' professional preoccupations are and, by making the necessary excerpts and excisions in the complex infinity of sciences and techniques, to devise a teaching method which organises that material into a living and progressive whole.

## ACTIVE EDUCATION

As has just been seen, adult education strikes its strongest and deepest roots where work is combined with action irrespective of the field in which that action takes place, whether it be the exercise of a professional, political, religious, public service or trade union activity. Similarly the educational and training methods best

calculated to produce the desired results are those in which the individual himself is the main agent in the formative process. It is a recognized fact that people retain an average of only 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they both see and hear and 70% of what they actually do for themselves. Even the best constructed and clearest expositions have very minor effect compared with practical work, even of a very ordinary kind, such as note-taking while reading. The conclusion is obvious: preference should be given, so far as possible, to activities in which the adult plays a positive part and can put his intellectual abilities to the test, whether by overcoming difficulty in understanding, or clearing up a confusion in his mind, or participating in discussion involving clash of opinions or temperaments.

The results which might reasonably be expected from a pedagogical method for adults then, are as follows: help in living fuller lives in better accord with their lives and the world, the stress being laid in that endeavour on the development of abilities and aptitudes and the establishment of a constant connexion and concordance between

thought and action, between the world of ideas and the world of deeds. The adult students must be taught the art of living in society moreover and this is particularly important they must be helped to acquire a method of intellectual work enabling them to grasp and transform the world around them. Adult education in fact and this sums up all that has been said so far is neither theoretical nor

individualistic. Its main purpose is to make men and women capable of assuming an increasing share of responsibility for their own fate as free and adult members of the community and of society. In other words it directs itself towards the human person as an individual and as a social being, with the aim of providing him with a richer more active and more harmonious life.

## CHAPTER II

### GROUP LIFE

#### THE GROUP AND THE PEDAGOGICAL PURPOSE

What is an adult education group? This question could be answered in many different ways depending on the particular country and circumstances. In some cases groups may to some extent be objectively capable of fulfilling popular education functions without themselves having a clear idea of those functions or a definite objective to inspire and guide them. Others may have been specially created for educational purposes and their leaders and even their members are subjectively aware of those purposes. What is involved in these definitions is not so much the concept of "the group" as that of mass education, popular culture and adult education: three terms incidentally which only partly coincide. The important thing, in the final analysis, is the educational purpose which could be defined in many ways depending on time and place. Despite the wide variety of experience, however, it is generally agreed to regard it as the desire to promote the individual cultural advancement of young people and adults by means of out of school and specially after-school activities and at the same time give them a larger and more active share in social life. In some countries where at any rate partial illiteracy still exists these activities for many adults are in fact a substitute for the schools they were unable to attend or failed to attend sufficiently. What is involved therefore is an educational purpose simultaneously directed, by its very nature toward individual and social life. More or less clear or conscious though it may be, it is this cultural and educational purpose which determines the significance of an activity: the latter may be regarded as coming within or outside the category of adult education, according to whether that purpose is in evidence or not. A sports group, for example, may or may not fulfill cultural functions and the same may apply to a group mainly engaged in open air activities or popular tourism. Everything depends on the way the main activity is carried out: playing football may be no more than recreational activity in some cases but in others the team is directed by a trainer who is able through play to develop not only the strength and skill of his players but also their minds and who makes football a means to an end and gradually adds other fields of

interest to it, such as film shows initially confined to athletic performances but progressively proceeding from the physical to other subtler and more complex spheres. The significance of the game may thus be broadened, the activities may ramify and become more educational: in other words the pedagogical purpose will gradually transform the football group into a "polyvalent" one with a wide range of activities. This development (which represents what happened in an actual case) can be studied in a host of specific instances but there is nothing invariable or inevitable about it. Other instances conversely may show the regression of a polyvalent group towards fewer and less comprehensive activities revealing the eclipse of the pedagogical inspiration, a process familiar to many young people's groups. This immediately underlines the importance of the educational purpose and the rôle of the organizer with his task of carrying out his programme in a democratic manner for we are dealing here with adults or at any rate fully-grown adolescents who cannot be given orders but must be led to accept the educational purpose as their own.

On the other hand, it is easy to conceive of adult education institutions whose public is in no sense a group. Here too, the educational purpose is carried out in a particular manner but without resorting to the group form of organization. The students who attend a People's University course one evening a week may remain complete strangers to each other and after several months still not know the names of their classmates. This is not at all singular or far-fetched. The fact is that the purpose behind such courses is not really educational in the broad sense of the word; it is essentially informative, the sole object being to transmit knowledge.

The absence of a real group spirit is not necessarily due to a particular form of institution. It is true that a People's University is perhaps less conducive than a youth centre to the formation of groups and that the spontaneous group which comes into existence where quarters are actually shared may be closer and "tighter" than the one created by a People's University study circle. The organizer's personality is obviously a more important factor than the nature of the setting in which group life proceeds but the extent to which the collective bond will take hold depends perhaps more on the nature of the

shared by the group members and their psycho-sociological impact than on the actual organizer. Political militants meeting at their party school, sharing the same ideal and moved by the same external pressures conscious of being a minority outlawed by present-day society and yet the proud possessors of a common call to transform history obviously form a very coherent group although excessive forms of discipline may later destroy that personal solidarity between members and atomize the individual in face of the abstraction of the Party a collective unit quite other than the sum of its members. Gangs of young people even without any institutional link, often achieve a far higher degree of integration. A minimum of solidarity in common purpose thoughts and feelings is essential if a number of individuals meeting in space and time are to coalesce into group just as there must be a minimum of pedagogical purpose and activity designed objectively to develop enrich and strengthen the human personality before a collective unit can be regarded as an adult education group.

#### TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF ADULT EDUCATION GROUPS

These points having been established we can now try to introduce some order into the infinite range of adult education groups capable of coming into existence under the most varied conditions bearing in mind always the necessarily fragmentary partial and hence hazardous nature of such attempts at classification.

The first distinction that can be made based on the general cultural level of the community to which the groups are designed and within which they are organized, is between fundamental education groups and adult education groups proper. The former have a very clear-cut general purpose; they seek, by simultaneously tackling on a number of vital fronts literary campaigns hygiene development of professional knowledge and practice and so on to produce a rapid and fundamental rise in the social and cultural level of the general community and of its individual members. Adult education proper comes into the picture once they have passed the fundamental education stage. Although arising from very different intellectual and social levels group problems are essentially the same fundamental education as for adult education proper and the basic educational purposes are likewise identical.

A further distinction may be made in adult education between formal activities and recreational activity. With the former as conducted in courses classes and institutions modelling themselves more or less closely on schools or universities (it is not by chance that many of them call themselves popular universities) there is a risk, as mentioned earlier of their

being inspired not so much by an educational purpose as by a desire to instruct, and of their concentrating on objectives peculiar to the individual at the cost of the demands of social integration. This instructional character is clearly apparent where the teacher often university trained is put in charge of a group of pupils who agree in effect to spend one two or three years trying to familiarize themselves with a particular branch of learning. Courses and lectures of this kind are a more or less close replica of the university proper. Recreational activities on the other hand exploit interests and activities related to the adult's normal life for educational purposes by trying to harness them and place them in the service of adult education. Typical examples are the cine-club and the tele-club which bring together audiences attracted by the features presented and then induce them to discuss what they have seen and heard including the commentator's comments. The main risk here is that the educational purpose may be submerged by the recreational function and a balance must be struck between the two.

The cine-club is a recreational institution based on the use of an instrument the cinema, in this specific case. Other recreational groups are defined more appropriately by the milieu to which they are directed. Diffusion according to milieu can apply equally well incidentally to formal adult education; there may be special activities for country folk or for workers or for adolescents (who in one sense constitute a milieu of their own). In most countries there are trade union schools catering primarily for militants to whom they impart the knowledge and skill they require in order to lead their fellow workers. Youth associations some of which may be regular institutions having their own premises and providing their members with recreational equipment (film apparatus sports gear etc.) give educational purpose to recreational facilities which may assume formal aspects (e.g. additional occupational training).

This last example brings up a further distinction between adult education associations and organizations on the one hand and adult education institutions on the other. In the former the emphasis is on the group as a gathering of individuals united by common purposes whereas the latter are establishments with their own equipment as well as their own administrative and sometime even teaching staff which forms their backbone. Groups which organize cultural excursions of their members come in the first category while local cultural centres of the type existing in many countries with programmes including lecture concerts film shows or theatrical performances come in the second. Yet another distinction, finally should be made between groups which engage in direct adult education and address themselves directly to the general public and those which operate indirectly

by helping to train educators and leaders through courses, seminars and the supply of documentary material.

A distinction might also be made between activities inspired by the public authorities and those due to private initiative: their relative importance differing according to the economic and social structure of each country. Where the initiative comes from the State, special problems naturally arise regarding the life of the group, whose autonomy of purpose and development may be affected by decisions from above.

## ORIGIN AND STATUS OF THE GROUP

We have seen the very broad conditions a group must fulfil in order to rank as an instrument of adult education. How do such groups come into existence in actual social life? What are the individual and collective requirements which they have to meet? An initial distinction must be made from the standpoint of external formation, between spontaneous (or de facto) groups and inspired (or de jure) ones. In the case of a spontaneous group crystallising round a central interest, idea, activity or personality, its birth as it were, precedes the sense of awareness and mission. The most typical example is the "gang" or, on the adult level, the group of friends who find the same sports events fairly regular attraction. For a group to come into being, its meetings must have a certain regularity or it must succeed each other at fairly close intervals. A spontaneous group of this kind may either display a high degree of integration ("the gang") or remain fairly loose and ill-defined (e.g. neighbours gathering from time to time in the home of one of their number in order to watch television). It may yet remain a de facto group, as when formal existence and become an association, or else a more or less integrated section of an already existing association. The degree of internal cohesion is not necessarily greater in the de jure than in the de facto group: but where the latter manages to survive it almost always becomes a constituted body for at least as an associated body and the possession of a status confer many advantages. A de facto group is debarr'd from carrying out any legal act: it has no public existence, it can neither rent a meeting place nor collect fees nor obtain tickets to congresses. It often happens that the pursuit of social aims will itself dictate the choice of legal status: the group, in the case in point, may wish to obtain assistance from the public authorities and will thus be led, by its own dynamism and the success which it has continued existence implies to institutionalise its specific functions, formulate its aims and catalogue its activities and resources. This transition may involve some risk: the institutional form is help, but also hindrance. Forms are

like supports for young trees: they help them to grow and at the same time dictate the direction of growth.

As to the different types of statutes, all that need be said here is that in general there are model statutes in all countries for the simplest form of group, and that there is no advantage in adult education groups adopting statutes which are too complex and restrictive.

The social objectives should be defined as broadly as possible: various main responsibilities laid down and democratic operation and financial control ensured. Where the laws of the land confer special advantages on associations serving the public interest, a group may find it useful to accept the institutional responsibilities corresponding to those advantages. But often the more "official" a group becomes the more it risks seeing its possibilities of rapid development and spontaneous adaptation to changing circumstances diminish.

## GROUP AND LEISURE TIME FUNCTIONS

Adult education groups, in the broad definition, may reflect a fairly wide range of individual and collective needs, their diversity being conditioned by the social environment in which they operate and which leads in a positive or negative direction. The desire of individuals to combine can always be treated to a reaction against the dangers and psychological disadvantages of isolation, or the realization that certain objectives, whether they are clearly perceived or not, can only be achieved through common action. The factors leading to the formation of a group are always a combination of positive (pleasure derived from living or acting in common, public interest) and negative (obsessive fear of solitude, weakness of the individual in isolation). Generally speaking, the new group arises where previously existing family or other groups no longer provide the benefits and guarantees which the individual seeks from them. Hence one of the functions of adult education groups is to compensate for a series of shortcomings: e.g. in family life, especially in urban and industrial society, as commonly exemplified by the housing shortage; in professional life, which brings only certain aspects of the worker's personality into play, often to excess and at the cost of over strain; and in recreational or traditional activities (folk culture), which have already become or are in process of becoming a thing of the past in many places or else, in their newness and crudity, fail to satisfy the human need for shared activity and mutual advancement. Some of these compensating functions are permanent phenomena: it has always been necessary to offset the excessive rigidity which family ties may have, especially for the young; and work has always had to be compensated by leisure. But



which are bound up with the material and social changes of our times the growth of urbanization, which today makes open air activities more necessary than ever and the dispersal of urban housing and the anonymity of town life necessitating the establishment of new types of groupings (such as family associations in the one case and cultural centres in the other). At the same time the forms in which the traditional compensations operate are themselves changing under the traditional cultural conditions formerly prevailing in the countryside young people had opportunities for self-development outside the family group and in a certain necessary state of tension towards it such as are not to be found in large modern towns. Applying the yardstick of these old or new requirements in order to narrow down the definition of the adult education group given at the beginning of this chapter we find that the group's compensating functions coincide in practice with leisure time activities. Work is educational, both in the occupational sense and through the influence it exerts on the personality in general, however that influence by definition, cannot operate in an adult education group whose activities are non-compulsory non-economic and unpaid. Family life also has notable and obvious educational functions which come completely outside the scope of a voluntary group based solely on the consent of its members which can be withdrawn at any time. The positive functions of working life and family life must if they are to remain positive be balanced by recreational activities which are separate from without necessarily being opposed to them and which compensate for and complete them (one can go to the cinema with one's family for example). Adult education groups are almost always "leisure-time groups" and as such they should all include among their various activities in varying proportions the three main functions of leisure in modern society: entertainment recreation and development. In other words they should attract the mind from professional cares and family worries relax nerves and muscles fatigued by actions and motions which are either limited and repetitive or (in the case of intellectuals) are varied but bring too few organs into play and ensure the more harmonious development of the personality.

The three functions of leisure-time and adult education group activities benefit both the individual and society: they are placed in equilibrium, develop by mutual interaction and exercise control over each other. Hence no educational activity can properly ignore them, lectures designed merely to develop the mind would have as little educational effect in the long run, as films seeking only to divert the audience relieving it of any effort of thought or experience of strong emotion.

Whatever the initial need which leads to the creation of a group, education continually should bring its members to feel new needs supplementary to the first. To take a concrete example a group of young mine-worker trainees was set up in a

war-damaged country to offset the adverse effects of underground work on its members by sports and open air activities. Step by step, under the guidance of an intelligent and competent organizer the young people have proceeded from sports to travel activities and thence to showings of films on sports and travel and later on miscellaneous subjects: public readings (readers club) and private reading; and finally musical appreciation sessions. Progression of this kind is part and parcel of the very concept of adult education (we would still use the word "progression" of course if a group went from intellectual or artistic activities to sports and open air activities for the essence of progression lies not in raising the physical to the intellectual level but in the transition from a group indulging in a single or favoured activity to a polyvalent group).

## AGE GROUPS

Like any other group, an adult education group has a life other than the sum of the periods of their individual lives which its members spend in it or devote to it. Groups like human beings pass through the stages of childhood, adolescence maturity and old age although in each stage a sudden revival or sharp decline may occur. The methods of work and leadership must naturally be adapted to these stages and take account of the experience gained up to that time. The group endures whereas its membership changes: the successive generations in the life of a group often change more rapidly than in life outside especially with youth groups. Conversely it may be that a generation clings to a group or is forced by circumstances to remain in it and especially in its leadership without undergoing any change. Leaders who continue in office for a long time run the risk, even if they are devoted and efficient of shaping the group in their own image stopping new people from assuming responsibility and subordinating the values of initiative to those of experience. Leaders should watch the rise of possible successors very closely and give them a chance of developing. They should then withdraw voluntarily in their favour. The age pyramid of a group, in general and in relation to the functions carried out, is a factor which must be constantly borne in mind, and the variations in it should be carefully noted. What has to be considered in this connexion is not only the civilian age of the individual members but their group age: i.e. the number of years spent in the group and in posts of leadership and responsibility. The rotation of teams and generations which should not of course be confused with institutional instability is essential in a group which is organically developing.

## THE GROUP AND ITS SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL STRUCTURE

The objectives and initial conditions of a group give it a certain social and professional structure the evolution of which should be closely watched. If for example one is running a cine-club which originally had a mixed social composition and it is found, after a certain time that it is being deserted by workers and is increasingly tending to attract employees minor officials tradesmen and students only that development may either be regarded as inevitable and steps taken to initiate another cine-club parallel to the first, for workers only or else action can be taken to counteract that trend. The main thing is to realize what is happening so that measures can be taken or suggested in full knowledge of the facts. This example shows the value of a permanent check on results, as referred to later in a separate chapter.

Suffice it, for the moment, to recall that other factors such as sex, level of education, urban or rural nature of the locality, housing conditions, forms of family life and social traditions (which include such diverse phenomena as working-class consciousness or survivals of folk culture) may have considerable effect on group life and it is important to track them down and analyse them in each case with the utmost accuracy.

## PARTS PLAYED IN THE GROUP

A regularly constituted group has to appoint certain of its members to carry out the functions provided for by the statutes (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer etc.). Functions and structures soon tend to take shape in *de facto* groups also. The functions in question, meanwhile, are not always coupled with authority especially in adult education groups whose leaders and organizers are already active outside the group (example: country school teacher running a post school education group). No matter how far authority lies outside or inside the group, some of it must always lie in the hands of the person responsible for organizing group life although its exercise may clash with the actual work of organizing. Leaving aside any question of selfish ends

authority sets itself certain objectives; and in following its ideal, the action to be taken becomes more important than the effect it has on the development of individual personality. Whatever may happen, the leader or organizer must be constantly on his guard and beware of his own paternalist tendencies especially if he is more cultured and perhaps has a higher social status than the other members of the group. These tendencies are more dangerous and often less conscious where the organizer has not emerged from the group but was there before it where he is its founder or spiritual father. Paternalism, the desire to mould the judgement

of others on one's own, may kill that organizer's sense of devotion and democracy. This explains why the intensity of democratic life inside a group (not only when general assemblies or elections are held but in day-to-day work) is a highly sensitive barometer of the organizer's failure or success. It is not merely a question of having proper elections of officers and leaders but also and especially of drawing the maximum number of members into group activity and seeing that speaking time is shared out fairly during discussions. The example of groups which have acquired the equipment they needed (film apparatus, television sets, furniture, etc.) by an effort of voluntary co-operation assumes its full educational value in this context.

Nor is it good for the organizer, whether elected, appointed or pre-existing, to remain isolated from the mass of members. The ideal for a group with a strongly educational purpose should be, rather, for each of its members to have separate responsibilities to fulfil, or even take turns in carrying out all kinds of duties. The organizer should in any case surround himself by assistants and train them systematically if they are too "raw". They are as it were the group's middle-class or educational overseers whose isolation from their own base incidentally should be carefully avoided. They can be given all sorts of duties to carry out such as administration, collecting contributions, operating equipment or helping to run the inquiries and surveys necessary for a more accurate check on results.

## NECESSITY OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY THE MEMBERSHIP

Adult education groups always have two objectives: the first external and connected with the activity in view and the second internal and more directly related to the human advancement of the members. Taking, for example the case of a cine-club meeting followed by a discussion on, say the neo-realist school, the external objective is to give the audience information on the subject and furnish their minds with fresh knowledge and impressions while the internal objective is to get them to exercise their personal judgement and become active peacemakers as it were through the means of presentation of the subject and the ensuing discussion. The style of work of an adult education group and the methods and instruments it uses thus assume pedagogical importance of the first rank. The new knowledge concretely transmitted to the members in the course of a group's activities will always remain piecemeal and limited, the purpose of adult education is not to stock the "customers' minds with encyclopaedia but to make them capable of working on their own to enrich and supplement their activity.

substantially though still inadequately enlarged by their attendance at the group. Above all, an adult education group should be a centre for training self taught or partly self taught men and women in methods of intellectual work suitable for persons who left primary school without attaining a sufficient degree of literacy. Cultural illiteracy often survives the attainment of literacy in the purely technical sense.

These observations should not lead, of course to the adoption of an agnostic or relativistic attitude towards the actual subject matter taught by adult education which would be tantamount to a reversal of the traditional system of pedagogy of the 19th century and the complete abandonment of concrete knowledge in favour of the art of living. As stated earlier, there has to be a state of tension and hence genuine coexistence between the two ways of conceiving adult education, both of which, far from being diametrically opposed, serve the same ideal, in the final analysis, of the emancipation of the human person. But where one prevails over the other, whenever the group becomes a school in the bad sense which that grand word sometimes has in the popular mind, or whenever conversely internal democracy and intellectual training through discussion become empty formalisms, it is the educational objective itself which suffers from these deviations.

## THE GROUP AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Both the individual group members and the group itself as a collective body have complex relationships with the surrounding milieu, as stated earlier in describing the needs resulting in the birth of a group and its successful operation. These relationships with societies milieu, systems and persons are essentially ambivalent: the group which has come into being to remedy a deficiency finds stimuli and excitations as well as obstacles and inhibitions in its environment, its existence and activities simultaneously promote and disturb the development of that environment. Take the well known example already mentioned several times of the cine-club. The group first arises from the need if by a minority to see films which cannot be seen in the normal way or to see other films which may have been shown in ordinary cinemas under better conditions without dubbing, for instance. In addition it meets a need for comparing, discussing and exchanging views, a need for more direct human relationships but also for self assertion and combativity. Where the cine-club operates successfully keen and active film audience is created which reacts against normal cinema programmes and ends up in the most favourable circumstances by exercising a not inconsiderable influence on the programmes presented and even on film production itself. Apart from its beneficent results, active participation by the audience

acquisition of the elements of a cinematographic culture partial effect on the climate of film production and distribution, the cine club's action also involves dangers (creation of a self taught experts who engage in discussions on film technique instead of caring about the message or purpose of the film) and produces economic, social and even political and legal reactions. Commercial cinemas may often try to fight the non-commercial networks, the taxation authorities object to the privileges enjoyed by education groups, the censorship authorities encroach on the freedom to which closed groups are entitled, the various ideological systems take over the non-commercial cinema as a useful means of influencing the masses or training militants. The balance-sheet shows a continual swing from credit to debit and back again, and the group and its organisers must constantly assess the value of their activity by viewing it within the general and contradictory context of these tensions.

The education group by its action, can transform (or help to transform) its environment. The 1953-1955 Unesco study on tele-clubs in France (Joffre Dumazedier, Television and Rural Adult Education, Unesco, Paris 1955, Roger Louis and Joseph Rovin, "Television and Tele-clubs in Rural Communities, Reports and Papers on Mass Communication No. 16, Unesco, Paris July 1959) and on their reactions to television programmes show the possibilities and limitations of this form of activity which is capable as witness the instance quoted of changing the attitude and behaviour of rural communities with regard to technical progress. A study made by All India Radio in co-operation with Unesco (the results are to be published in 1959) similarly shows how radio broadcasts to Indian peasants giving advice on health and agricultural practices gained considerably in effect when listened to by groups which discuss them. The individual, by himself, would shrink from opposing routine and tradition. Discussion and group life encourages him to do so by showing him that he is not alone in adopting new behaviour patterns.

Hence it is as vital for adult education groups not to evaluate their successes and results solely in terms of themselves and their members severally or jointly. Educational work has more than individual significance: it is aimed also at the communities to which the individual belongs which he constitutes and by which he is

simultaneously moulded. School teachers cannot complacently tot up figures for their pupils' examination success as if contemporary history meanwhile reveals that those same pupils fall after they have left school, to fulfill their functions as active citizens. Even in a popular education, which is directed to a voluntary minority of the fully grown youth and adults of a nation, measure its success solely in terms of the progress made by individuals. Whether its rôle as a stimulus is recognized or whether it is

not fully appreciated the only reason for the adult education group's challenge to society in general and in local society in particular is its

desire to serve it. Educators should be conscious of this vocation, and know how to assess and evaluate the results

## THE GROUP AND ITS IMPLEMENTS AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNIQUES

## THE VARIOUS TYPES OF IMPLEMENTS

Most group activities involve the use of implements and there are special techniques for using them. Actually the terms activity, implement or instrument (the two latter might be supplemented by the terms "medium and aid") and "technique" which we list here in the logical order of progression as if we merge with each other in practice and are often used ambiguously. An implement or aid such as the film for instance may well be an activity as far as the group is concerned (the group goes in for films). Some of these "implements" may become the pivotal points of group activity when its objectives relate to the leisure-time occupation or professional development and progress of its members or when it seeks to raise their general cultural level or promote their civic education.

The implements now available to groups of all kinds for their work cover a very wide range. Premises or installations no matter how exiguous might be said in the very broadest sense to be essential instruments or rather equipment. But they are equipment providing the pre-conditions for activity rather than auxiliary instruments proper. Books on the other hand must be included in the latter category. The concrete object "book" as part of a library may be read on the premises or lent out for home reading and this traffic or operation may be an important group activity. A book could likewise be used for public reading at group meetings or in connection with dramatics or it could be the subject of a general discussion. The implement here is not merely the concrete object "book" but the totality of the activities which can be undertaken thanks to it (and especially its contents of course) and around it.

Lectures, talks and study circles are not objects but techniques which as the spoken word as their sole material. Though in a broader sense they might be described as implements in the service of group life. Lectures, as a "technique" come in the same category as the technique of reading clubs, public readings of novels or plays or cine-club performances although they may also make use of other implements and reinforce the effect of the spoken word by other sounds or by visual material (graphs, filmstrips, films, gramophone records, tape recordings etc.) The various techniques and

the various implements may serve as mutual aids depending on the stress laid by the group on one or other of them. Thus lectures may serve as aids to films or books to gramophone records. Public discussion viewed in its broadest sense is itself an implement serving all the others at the same time. It is autonomous in the sense that it is independently capable of promoting the group life and the progress of the members: to "learn to discuss" means not only to acquire a practical knowledge of discussion technique (still another use of the word "technique") but also to train the mind and make it more capable of handling the problems of life.

## THE MACHINE AS THE SERVANT OF THE GROUP AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

In this interplay of instruments and techniques where no one is always the servant nor yet the master all in the final analysis are servants of the group and the individuals belonging to it. A commonplace distinction may conveniently be made at this point by placing instruments and techniques based on the use of mechanical devices in a separate category. Unlike the more traditional activities ranging from lectures to readings and part the "techniques of film, radio and television are mainly characterized by the fact that mechanical devices are used for applying them. To go in for films a projector and often a film camera are necessary just as a receiving set is required in order to go in for television or run a talk (or radi) club. The gramophone record or tape recorder for their part are used as aids for more traditional activities such as music whether practised or listened to or dramatics but at the same time they transform their conditions and extend their possibilities almost indefinitely. Instead of having a group which practises chamber music for example we might have one which listens to records goes on to recording and moving techniques and in this roundabout way in theory at least may eventually come back to practising chamber music.

The instrument serving the group is not imply the device or machine but the activity which can be conducted with and around it. The particular attraction of the new implement which technical progress makes available to groups in this way is

their very novelty and the fact that it makes some of mankind's oldest dreams come true. The film, in fact, is able to give the dream world and the fairy-tale real substance while television eliminates the dual barrier of space and time and bestows the gift of omnipresence on the view. However strong an attraction the book may continue to exert on habitual readers, its somewhat retiring charms are often overshadowed by the more massive, blatant and compelling power of film or television. The use of mechanical devices gives the new aids a power of fascination and aggressiveness even that puts them in a class by themselves. With the adoption of these new implements, a group which had previously depended only on the book or the lecturer's spoken word, or on direct participation activity by its members would see a transformation in the very nature of its internal relations while even its objectives and the needs which its activities are designed to meet would be affected. The new aids face the group with the problem of how to assimilate them.

# AUDIO-VISUAL TECHNIQUES VERSUS THE GROUP

Experience shows in fact that with the new type of implement the power it exerts is heightened by that of the machine which it embodies. The machine, however familiar or intimate its workings never loses its mystagogic hold on the human mind and the fact of its creating and fostering myths may affect a group in many different ways. Where the group antedates the use of the new medium, the latter may give it either new vitality or a fatal shock. It is quite common for groups to be expressly constituted round a new instrument (ciné-clubs, tape-clubs) in which case there is a great danger that the instrument may eventually smother the group or, putting it in another way, the purpose for which it was originally used. The aid like the sorcerer's broom gets out of hand as far as the group and especially the organisers are concerned. This has been the fate of scores of ciné-clubs where the technical aspect the obsessive urge to get to know and use the cinema as an instrument has overgrown the initial social purpose and significance. Groups in this situation gradually cut themselves off from "popular culture" which in its inmost sense is the general development of personality and not the acquisition of knowledge in any particular field. "Monothetic groups" (the term is no doubt more correct than the usual one "monovalent") those which go in for only one "technique" (ciné-clubs, tape-clubs or radio clubs) are particularly exposed to this danger. Where the members are offered a choice between a wide range of activities that choice may be in danger of becoming a dead letter from time to time but there is less risk of seeing them succumb to the technical mindedness which has drained so many ciné-clubs of their cultural content.

The risk of being side-tracked is always present, even where the implement does not bring with it a ready-made programme prepared outside the group as in the case of radiotelevision and especially the film. Amateur photography and cinematography are activities in which there is sometimes a risk that the actual equipment may become the mainspring of the group's interest or in this case enthusiasm which becomes entirely focussed on the technical side of the activity. The production of "first class" photographs and the acquisition of bigger and better equipment aims which are quite legitimate in themselves but may also become an obsession thenceforward become the group's sole object. In this case, again, the monothetic group should strike a balance and see that its members do not become completely engrossed in a single "hobby".

These dangers should be carefully watched by groups and especially by group organisers who will have to counteract such tendencies by suitable methods without coming into head-on conflict with the members. They will have to be constantly mindful that techniques, implements or even groups are there to serve a purpose and that knowledge of a technique in relation to a particular field of human or social endeavour has no point, in adult education, unless it helps to develop the group members' personality or increase their influence on their environment. A knowledge of the cinema is not a sufficient objective for a ciné-club. Knowledge by itself is not an end in itself on the other hand and this is truer than ever today as understanding of the instrument which man has devised to increase his control of the universe and of how to use them, is an essential part of culture. Implements must never be more than implements if man is to increase in stature.

# AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA AND DISCUSSION

Audio-visual media are implements serving the adult education group, while discussion is an implement serving the activities for which the film, television, the tape recorder and so on are aids. Discussion is thus a second-degree as well as a first-degree implement. It has in fact two major objectives: it must improve the use which the group makes of an instrument such as the film (it helps to strengthen, and if necessary correct or supplement the impression left by the film, and lends point and sharpness to the thoughts aroused) while at the same time it has to provide instruction on how to discuss. It uses its independent function in this as by helping group members to increase their power of self-expression and by training them in the more effective exercise of whole hosts of concrete tasks where free thinking and speaking to the point are essential. Discussion promotes the intellectual and even the moral and social development of those who take part in it. Like participation in any other

specific undertakings successfully carried out by concerted action. It provides a lesson in individual co-operation in a grand symphony in which all have a part to play and in which those who keep silent and those who try to silence their fellows are equally guilty of bad form.

The independent function of discussion (we put the word in "quotes" to show that it is a *quo* tion not of absolute independence of discussion for discussion's sake but of a first-degree function serving the cultural purpose behind all adult education groups) is greatly enhanced where implements are used. In relation to discussion, the new audio-visual aids occupy the same subordinate position as discussion does in relation to them when placed in their service. It is a case of an exchange of courtesies between implements of a different kind but all devoted to the same ends. Adult education has need of this interplay of implements. People will discuss more effectively the greater their stock of images and ideas. The stimulating effects of the miraculous catches netted by television and the cinema may not be felt immediately for the emotions aroused among the viewers may be too strong to permit of discussion in which case the leader will have to take care not to over force the discussion by insisting on it before it can bear fruit.

### THE THREE CULTURAL FUNCTIONS OF AUDIO VISUAL AIDS

Let us now consider how audio-visual aids can promote the activities which they are designed to serve. Their cultural functions are three in number. Take for example, the film. What is the purpose of activities of the cine-club type? In the first place to arouse active attitudes and reactions among an audience whose normal response to films is characterized by physical and mental passivity. The cinema audience submits but the cine-club audience is expected to react, not only for the sake of its own mental health but also in order to create among the broad mass of filmgoers for whom the cinema is a school of estrangement from life, new focal points of activity, criticism, reflection, refusal or acceptance in place of the passive submission of the devotee. The audience needs to be made familiar with the cinema in order to become proof against its poison but sensitive to its splendours.

The second function is to enrich the minds of the members by giving them a new insight into the nature of the instrument itself. It is obviously useful to learn all about dolly or travelling shots, initiating the audience into cinema "know how" means helping to dispel its illusion, make it aware of the aims and purpose of a film, and destroy the attitude of submissive acceptance of make-believe and pleasing myth. This last point is particularly important. The general reading, listening, film going and television public has not the slightest

idea, very often, of how the production it consumes in the cinema or at home in front of its sets has been created and brought before it. These untrained "consumers" have scarcely any inkling that it is a product in the craft sense a work by an author with a purpose which he has expressed in it. Quite often, they do not even remember the title of a film they have just seen although they may, at a pinch, be able to recall the name of one of the actors or actresses. Once he grasps the analogy with the work of a craftsman however the ordinary spectator, listener or reader will be able to ask himself what the author's purpose was and go on to consider how and with what success that author tried to carry it out. For the adult group member problems of content and treatment, the development of a critical attitude and the formation of an aesthetic judgement concerning purposes and methods are vital and still largely unexplored fields which a more detailed study of group instruments used can open up. This method of approaching and explaining film, radio, television and even literary work may to some extent also help to breach the wall of mutual ignorance which still separates manual workers from the producers of intellectual and artistic works.

However the decisive contribution to be made by group instruments in imparting new knowledge has nothing to do with the instruments themselves nor with their mode of operation, production techniques, devices or mechanisms but with the new knowledge itself as imparted through content of the material transmitted. Films, radio and television are enlarging the field of contemporary man's experience almost to infinity and the educator's problem is rather to bring a certain degree of order into the chaotic welter of information available to inventory and classify it, study how to use it, and open the road to what remains obscure or unknown in this field.

The three functions of audio-visual aids then, are (1) to stimulate active attitudes, (2) to transmit new knowledge concerning the instrument itself; and (3) to convey new knowledge through the content of the film, radio or television programmes presented.

The first two functions come within the field of initiation into cinematographic, radio or television art. In the case of the first of these the term "film education" is also used, it is in connexion with the cinema in fact that the question of initiation into the art of information media has been most exhaustively studied. Television is far more recent, while with radio the question is less urgent, and for that reason it has been given comparatively little attention so far. An examination of the relations between these media and the general public would come outside the scope of this Manual, and all that need be said here is that cine-club, tele-club, radio club and all similar forms of adult education groups in general have an important task to fulfil, which might be defined

as stripping the media in question of their cloak of mystery. Unesco, incidentally, is to publish in 1958 a study on film education.

The third function, the imparting of knowledge through the content of information media, comes within the field of education aids. Here again, it is impossible for the Manual to deal in detail with the use of audio-visual aids such as films, filmstrips, flannelgraphs, photographs, posters and other visual aids, television, radio, tape recordings and gramophone records. The field is too vast and it has already been explored in other works. However, there are one or two general observations that may usefully be made. Audio-visual aids can be divided into motivation aids which seek to modify attitudes and instructional aids. The latter are usually designed expressly for that particular purpose (didactic aids) although this is not an invariable rule. Non-didactic aids such as documentary films and many feature films can be used to good effect for imparting new knowledge; there is, of course, one human problem which is not the subject of a film, be it short or full length. These are aids which no educator should cast aside or allow himself to be deprived of.

By and large, adult education workers will be well advised to make use of non-didactic as well as motivation aids. The adult hears anything that reminds him of school methods or requires effort without yielding pleasure (for he devotes quite enough effort to his often exhausting everyday work). The so-called commercial film which tells a story may prove to be an instructional medium exerting an effect which will be all the more striking and lasting through having been registered emotionally. A film which depicts the life of a miner with its tragedies, joys and sorrows will be more successful in giving a picture of what colliary work means than even a well-made documentary which could, however, be used once the fiction story has opened a breach in the spectator's wall of indifference. Nor should it be forgotten that the public sees the former type of film week after week, whereas (with certain exceptions) it holds aloof from the latter type. This does not mean, of course, that the documentary should be banished from adult education groups, especially those which have already made some progress. The sole point is to stress the importance of the contributions coming through the instrument which has the greatest hold over the general public: the commercial film. Contributions which no educator has the right to ignore. But neither should didactic aids be neglected, especially for studying specialised (e.g. scientific) subjects.

#### AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS PRESENTING A PROGRAMME PREPARED OUTSIDE THE GROUP

Between the film, the filmstrip, the tape recording and the gramophone record, on the one hand, and radio and television programmes on the other, there is an important practical difference which

determines how much benefit the educator can derive from these implements. The form, once they have been produced, can be used anywhere and at any time; they are true aids placed in the service of activities whose content, progress, place and time they influence only very indirectly. Radio and television programmes, on the other hand, exercise far more strict authority over the educational activities which try to make use of them. The activity must be arranged around the programme, the date of which is fixed and which cannot, as a rule, be repeated. The film serves as an aid to the organizer who has selected an activity corresponding to his personal aptitude or knowledge and now seeks suitable films by way of illustration, whereas with radio and television, he has to base his programme on those of the broadcasting stations which are rarely designed to cater for educational requirements or are purely cultural ones. He has to obtain additional documentation in order to make up for the broadcasts, whereas the film is normally an adjunct to the material he already has. With programmes of the existing type, the use of radio and especially television, although tempting in view of the wide variety of subjects and the attraction of catching life on the wing and seeing history in the making, sets the organizer difficult problems and special documentation handbooks are now being experimentally used to overcome them. There is still another difficulty to be contended with: the fact that audio-visual aids are not always as good or effective as they should be. The problems involved in their production cannot be gone into here, but it should at least be stressed that co-ordination between production teams and specialists in adult education is highly desirable for the former; whether they realize it or not, can exert good or bad though in any case decisive effect on the minds of that public. Without being formally recognized as such, they are educators to the highest degree.

Co-ordination is perhaps more difficult to achieve when it comes to films. In the first place, there are questions of financial returns which compel the producer to think in terms which often have nothing in common with adult education. Most adult education movements, unfortunately, are in no position to shoulder the cost of producing the films they need (which raises the question worth study by all of them of organizing the non-commercial market). Film production, too, is far less concentrated than television or radio production.

Television and radio offer better prospects so far as co-operation between producers, films and educators is concerned, and there is no doubt that they have an important part to play in adult education. Joffre Dumazedier, in his study "Television and Rural Adult Education" published by Unesco in 1955, gives a typical illustration of this when he describes a concrete experiment.



in collaboration between television producers and educators covering a series of 11 broadcasts to rural tele clubs in France on agricultural questions

There is concerning radio one further point. Certain specialists feel that the effect of the advent of television may be to lead radio to concentrate more and more on specialised audiences. Such a development would undoubtedly benefit adult education.

## A REMINDY : RECORDINGS

The difficulties inherent in general programmes fixed in advance without relation to the programmes of particular groups wishing to use them can be offset by the use of two techniques or instruments: tape recordings of radio broadcasts and kinescopes of television broadcasts. Generally the application of the first technique is plain sailing apart from legal considerations: questions of copyright etc. Where the recording is strictly intended for internal use, these difficulties should not be insurmountable: for recording equipment is becoming more and more readily available and easy to manipulate; and the work could be done by the group itself. The establishment however of record libraries or fully fledged public or commercial sound libraries would undoubtedly promote the wider dissemination of programmes or montages useful to groups. As regards kinescopes which are expensive to produce and can only be made in the studio, a transcription of the magnetic sound into optical sound is still necessary if the films of the televised broadcasts are to be used as ordinary films for projection by the 16 mm. equipment which adult education groups usually have. Yet the fact remains that the vast resources of a programme running for many hours a week could completely revolutionise the possibilities of the film in the service of adult education. A Unesco study on the potential use of kinescopes in adult education film circuits clearly shows the great benefit our groups would derive from a development of this kind (Unesco is to publish the study in 1958). The obvious advantage of tape recordings and kinescopes is that they enable presentation and discussion to be more effectively prepared and are easier to fit in to the group programme. Their use would transform radio and television into what they are not, in the true sense, today: real instruments in the service of adult education groups. Admittedly they would have a price to pay for such progress in the loss of one of their main attractions: the sense of directness and liveness.

In the case of tape recordings there is another aspect to their use which is of very immediate benefit for discussion purposes: they allow the group to listen to itself after the heat of the battle, all passion spent. The group and its members can then make general and individual

criticisms of the various contributions, study their construction (or lack of it) and evaluate the general trend of the discussion and its various stages and digressions. The organiser will stand to gain as much from this as the members. Tape recordings will also be very useful for checking results by permitting a comparison between one discussion and another: they will provide a yardstick for measuring the progress which the group and its members have made. In particular they are essential instruments for a serious study of vocabulary building and, as we shall see in the chapter on the checking of results, they provide a first rate index of achievement. Members with a scanty vocabulary consisting only of concrete terms are able through group activities and discussion to increase their stock by adding new words, especially of a more abstract and technical kind.

Tape recordings could be described as the group's collective memory: its recorded history thanks to which it can gain a better idea of the headway it has made. It is a control which every group should try to acquire.

## THE ACQUISITION OF IMPLEMENTS

It will not be out of place perhaps to make a few points concerning the acquisition of implements. It is always a good thing if the effort to raise the necessary funds for acquiring the equipment it needs comes from the group itself or at least if it makes a substantial contribution in that direction. Experience shows that a collective effort of this kind has an educational value of its own from the social angle (it contains the germ of co-operative purchasing group) and that people are more appreciative of what they have helped to pay for out of their own pockets and like to get value for their money. Collective acquisition gives the group greater coherence and provides a stronger foothold for the activities for which the equipment is to be used as the instrument or aid.

This point having been made, it is obvious that there will be many cases where a group can hardly be required to put forward an effort of this kind, let alone a series of efforts. Nevertheless, it should always be asked to make a material contribution, however small, in the form of cash or labour. Several of the Adult Education Centres maintained by the "Unione per la Lotta contro l'Analfabetismo" in southern Italy were built by voluntary labour contributed by people in the local villages, with the Union providing the funds for material purchases and paying the architect's fees. The villagers now regard the Centres as their own, and use them regularly. This example is worth thinking over.

But there is a further point: that adult education groups fulfil an important social function on behalf of the general community and

It is only fair that the authorities should take this into account and come to their assistance. Where a group matches up to certain conditions which will obviously have to be defined in specific but flexible terms (proper checking of results will be very useful in this connection also) it has a right to help of this kind, just as it has the duty of helping itself through the combined efforts of its members. Thus the formula effort by group members plus assistance from the authorities has much to commend it. It is always astonishing if a municipality, provincial authority or government is unaware of the value of work of adult education groups and is unwilling to assist them in obtaining the equipment they need just as a group relying solely on subventions in order to start up activities is a matter for surprise.

Finally it would be better for groups not to be dependent on the favours of the authorities for assistance in cash or equipment but to be able as they are in many countries to participate through their representatives and in collaboration with the official departments concerned in formulating and executing the assistance programme under which they will benefit. This sort of collaboration is extremely valuable from the standpoint of social education, and provides training for the discharge of major responsibilities.

In those countries where the practice is to formulate a general plan for raising the cultural level of the population, the groups themselves which contribute towards that rise should participate in preparing the plan, just as inside the groups there should be democratic discussions on all questions relating to the acquisition of equipment (requests for assistance or subventions) with each member sharing in the decisions just as later he will share in the use of the equipment.

One useful result, where the authorities (especially those representing the general community) are interested in equipping adult education groups with audio-visual material will be to promote the standardisation of that material. The differences in the revolution speeds of tape recorders for example have given the users some unpleasant surprises; while not all television

sets are suitable for group reception. The authorities can be of very great indirect help to groups by publishing approved lists of equipment requiring the makers to conform to certain specifications as a condition for listing their products and encouraging the production of special models which are stronger, safer and adaptable for group use. The groups for their part have every reason to prefer such tried and tested models to equipment which may sometimes look handsome and seem more economical but may well turn out to be a great disappointment.

## SUPPLY SOURCES FOR AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

So far the reference has mainly been to the acquisition of projectors, wireless and television sets, tape recorders and the like. However, groups using audio-visual aids have the problem of obtaining supplies of films, filmstrips, records and other matter (even kitescopes perhaps) in short all the material without which the equipment will be so much useless junk. Many countries have film libraries where groups can obtain commercial films and documentaries and there are public and private agencies which have lists of filmstrips and records available. A great deal of work on co-ordination, information and documentation has already been done in many fields with a view to giving groups easier access to these sources but there is still much room for improvement. Furthermore films, filmstrips and records have to be properly presented, explained and commented if they are to be used to the best advantage. Quite often, group organisers are not too well briefed on the subject which means that they have to be supplied with additional information material and documentation specifically designed for their use and adapted to adult education group requirements. This work material, in the form of film or record notes, documentation folders and with a common system of headings perhaps for each item covered, are essential to the educator in carrying out his task of presenting and commenting the works transmitted through the implements.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

Discussion comes as naturally to man as breathing. One has only to listen to very young children chattering about cars. They try for hours to convince each other that no car can beat the one they favour. They are never at a loss for arguments. "Your Jaguar's fast, maybe, but it uses too much petrol. My Fiat's more practical, and the spare parts don't cost much either, and so on. All is grist to the mill for this kind of discussion, whether the pleasures of a holiday in the mountains as compared with the seaside, or the claims of the children, respective families to fame and importance.

## UNORGANIZED DISCUSSION

In this word play, skin to sword play, the important thing always is to demonstrate one's strength and superiority over one's antagonist, and just as the muscles, respiration and agility are developed by wrestling and physical competition, these verbal exchanges are essential for developing the mind. In making them, man discovers the power of the word and acquires an awareness and mastery of an important element of his intellectual capacity. At the same time, he gets used to the communication of ideas and impressions which, in conjunction with affective relationships and routine habits, goes to make up sociability. Adults argue on all possible subjects on all possible occasions: in the factory concerning piece-rates; in the museum, concerning pictures; or in the café concerning the merits and demerits of politics and politicians. Each day brings its spate of tupidities, banalities and malice, but at the same time much that is true and profound concerning life's ups and downs.

## DISCUSSION IN THE SERVICE OF EDUCATION

An adult education system seeking to link educational work with the problems and activities of everyday life can hardly afford to ignore so effective an instrument of mental development as discussion, briefly referred to, in Chapter III as a group implement in the service of other implements. Discussion in the raw, however, is very imperfectly adapted to the needs and

requirements of genuine culture. The sort of improvised discussion one comes across every day may do as much harm as good. It may just as well hamper the development of constructive mental attitudes and healthy social relations as promote intellectual exchanges and communication.

It has been necessary in consequence to canalise and harness as it were the potentialities of discussion. Without destroying its forcefulness, it has had to be subjected to rules to enable it to serve the ends of adult education. In other words, from its understanding of the world of ideas and action, develop sociability and increase the speaker's ability to express his thoughts and feelings. Subjected to these rules, illumined by experience, enriched by the results of sociological and psychological research and co-ordinated with other methods and techniques, discussion has become a powerful instrument of cultural development, occupying a key place in pedagogics for adults.

The following paragraphs describe a number of systems and rules whose soundness and value have been proved by experience. There is nothing rigid about and-dried about them for discussion is a vital phenomenon, and one of its main virtues is flexibility and capacity to adapt itself to the thousand and-one facets of life. But group organisers may find it useful to have certain details concerning various rules and procedures which practice has shown to be effective.

In the first place, stress should be laid on the important part the group leader, or group organiser, must play in developing the discussion. Yet his place in the group must be always clearly defined and delimited, while he is responsible for the group, he is not its head. It is essential, if the group is to become conscious of itself as a concrete entity and an agent for educational work, that no one of its members should enjoy excessive authority. The leader or organiser of the group is its servant throughout his entire term of office on the same footing as any other member, although with different functions. In the moral sense, it is as a representativity of the group that he carries out certain functions which, in any rate in theory, could have been entrusted to another member for a short or long period. His functions will therefore be on the lines described below.

## DEMOCRATIC ATMOSPHERE

Not all milieux are ready to accept discussion as an instrument for intellectual advancement. Take the example of what happened during a visit to an adult education institute where everything seemed to be perfect: the class rooms were well equipped and attractive, the bookshelves well stocked, and the programmes well chosen and judiciously adapted to local conditions. At the end of the visit the very natural question was put "how do you organize your discussions following the lectures?" The director seemed shocked: "Discussions? We don't have them: we want no disorderly behaviour here."

His reply is typical of the authoritarian and paternalistic attitude. Individuals and milieux with that cast of mind regard order in the sphere of learning, as the imparting of knowledge already fixed according to strict and almost sacred rules of grading. According to this view minds are of two classes: the ignorant ones at the receiving end and the learned ones at the giving end. It is easy to see that the forms of instruction most close to matching this attitude are lectures and professional training courses.

The use of discussion implies an altogether different approach which might be termed democratic. When Descartes wrote at the beginning of his "Di. cours de la Méthode" that common sense is the most common thing in the world, he was proclaiming the equality of minds in the face of truth and knowledge. Not everyone is equally learned of course: the man who has spent his life studying the Egypt of the Pharaohs knows more about the history of the Pyramids than the peasant who spends his time cultivating his land and looking after his cattle. But does the Egyptologist know more about life, the seasons, war and peace, or the bringing up of children? It is possible even, indeed, probable, that the peasant's general knowledge is far superior in many ways to that of the man who can claim membership of whole series of learned academies.

The conclusion to be drawn is that knowledge is not the privilege or characteristic of any one milieu or class of person, but that it is always limited and peculiar to the individual abundant here and scanty there: abstract theoretical and bookish in a particular field, and concrete and rich in experience in another.

A second conclusion, still more important and decisive, is that no one is privileged to be always right: still less to know what is right for others. It is not through the authority of a person in a better position to know and judge the facts that the truth concerning a situation, event or problem is established, but through the reliance which everyone must place on what seems to him sufficiently well proven or probable.

Everyone has a point of view to advance on the evidence of his senses, experience and judgement.

This is his right and duty: and it is by pooling all evidence of this kind that we can get nearer to a correct apprehension of reality. The most suitable instrument for exchanges of this kind is discussion. In a study group where discussion proceeds as it should, the experience of the historian can illumine and clarify that of the sociologist, the theoretical approach of the jurist and the practical approach of the politician reach a synthesis after their initial antithesis and men and women, respective views on life converge towards a higher harmony. Given mutual support for each other's efforts, these exchanges in all their manifold forms bring out the underlying unity of mind.

## PEACEABLE ATMOSPHERE

At our present level as citizens and members of the community, discussion is a factor for peace: provided the group meeting is properly conducted. An educational discussion is not a jousting-ground with the prize going to the best accoutred opinions and the strongest arguments. There is no question of being the victor and disarming the adversary by reducing him to silence. The important point to remember is that the essence of knowledge means not triumphing over the ignorance of others, as is all too often believed, but discovering truth. Its acquisition depends on self-mastery through the construction first of all for oneself, but also for the use of others, of an investigation and control method guiding the way through the jungle of errors and prejudices.

Discussion ceases to be polemical in adult education groups and institutions and antitheses merge into higher synthesis. It is no longer a question of triumphing over the weak, but of advancing together by pooling skill and knowledge towards a fuller awareness, deeper wisdom, and new social attitudes.

If the discussion is to retain its collective character, it is essential for all group members to join in exchanging ideas and impressions. In this connexion the group must take care not to split into two smaller groups: consisting of those who speak up and express themselves and those who keep quiet and are content to sit back and follow the discussion.

General participation is not achieved automatically for there are many obstacles to prevent it.

Every group contains some personalities that are "overwhelming": others that are naturally reserved. There are the loquacious types who are always on their feet and unable to stop talking, and the dominating types who try to impose their point of view and impose the group by a display of knowledge: and there are those who are afraid of the sound of their own voice and the reserved ones who feel no need to communicate their view to others. Social reasons apart from

psychological considerations may also reduce some of the participants to silence a farm hand for example will often hesitate to join in the discussion if his employer or overseer is present It will be necessary therefore to impose moderation and temperateness on the discussion hogs and encourage the others to join in the game and to do that the organizer will need all his personal authority and tact Some people will be induced to break their silence if addressed before the whole group whereas others will dig in their heels even more firmly if approached in this way A brief man to man talk will often succeed in overcoming psychological obstacles in some cases It may be useful to give the shy ones a specific job which they seem capable of tackling, in order to restore their self confidence But here again a formalistic approach should be avoided While it is a good thing for everyone to participate it would be wrong to insist on it regardless of the circumstances It is essential not to do violence to the feelings of group members who prefer to keep quiet or await a more favourable moment to speak Respect for each individual is an absolute rule

## THE GROUP AND ITS COMPOSITION

The better the group the better the discussion will be which means that special attention must be paid to the group's composition There is very little the organizer can do of course in this connexion People normally come together because of their natural affinities tastes preoccupations and common interests and also of course as the result of chance But in so far as the leader has any power and real power is always based on natural authority and not on rules and regulations the following principles may be usefully taken as a guide

The number of participants should be neither too small nor too large Where there are fewer than seven, the group ceases to be a collective body it no longer has sufficient strength, weight or variety to impress its members who revert to their isolation and cease to communicate with each other except on an individual basis Above 15-20 the group often begins to lose its particular stamp and become a crowd, tendencies towards herd-thinking appear the naturally retiring personalities remain in the shade and make way for the dominating ones which the group is no longer able to control This is a problem familiar to school teachers with their classes of often fifty or more they know from experience that the optimum figure is between 20 and 25 However it is difficult, especially in adult education with its "informality and lack of constraint, to limit groups to these ideal numbers The principle "leave well alone" is a wise one recurring in many languages In contrast to a parliamentary commission, with its sub-commissions a

ciné club with 200 or 300 members will find it impossible to split up into small groups to discuss the same subject or take up points of common interest Rather than turn down or discourage persons willing to participate it would be better to adopt discussion methods suited to the majority with a time-limit for speakers The tendency in such cases is for the discussion to develop into separate dialogues between each "performer" and the "band leader" whose rôle is thus rendered more dominant and, in one sense more authoritarian He finds it impossible to spend too much time on specific arguments advanced by each participant and has to take care not to let the discussion wander into too many highways and byways He must keep it going at a smart and almost rattling pace so that the members' attention remains focussed on the subject matter otherwise private coteries will start performing in the background and their initially sotto voce accompaniment will become louder and louder and end up by destroying the unity of the discussion The leader on his stand facing the seated group finds himself acting as an "animal tamer" as it were controlling by the power of his hand and eye the subject "beasts" ready to devour him He must sense the reactions of the various sections of the group watch out for the first signs of lassitude as the signal for switching to a fresh argument and encourage questions from sections that have remained silent, like the conductor of an orchestra who by a flick of the hand draws sound from an instrument which has so far been muted

One possible way of overcoming the all too evident disadvantages of large groups they are matched by no less solid advantages for discussion in them, when conducted by a good organizer can grip the participants just as effectively as a more searching discussion in a smaller group is to try to divide them on the basis of certain affinities If a ciné-club has its own hall, for example with films available for more than one showing, it can organize itself into separate clubs for young people workers and so on However such departmentalization, which deprives the group of some of its key elements has obvious drawbacks although it is not always possible for reasons of space or social incompatibility to avoid it And while such subdivisions are feasible in the case of a ciné-club which can in theory at least show the same film indefinitely to as many sub-groups as it sees fit to have the position would be otherwise with a tele-club (unless it had a number of television sets in separate rooms) The only real limiting factor with the tele-club is the capacity of the set, a normal receiver with a 43 or 54 cm screen can serve a maximum of about 30 viewers Beyond that number groups would be well advised to obtain television projectors which are more expensive and often more difficult to handle But in this case also

it is better to have groups of 100 than to turn people away. This "rule" incidentally does not absolve the organizer from trying to follow up the results of the projection (or broadcast) and discussion which have taken place in the full group, perhaps in small study circles which go more thoroughly into the subject.

Nothing prevents the establishment of an ad hoc group for limited periods or even for single meetings to study a particular problem; and there is no reason why such short term work should not result in useful conclusions. Such meetings however will have no very great educational value.

The normal setting for a discussion is a stable group capable of working with a certain degree of application and regularity. Only where such stability exists will the discussion have the proper style and pace for permitting the ideas of the group and the thoughts of its members to develop as they should, step by step.

Ideally the group should (and very often does) comprise elements sufficiently different in origin and social status to permit a clash of opinion to the mutual benefit of all concerned. Where there is too great a similarity of approach, or of taste and judgement, differences in opinion either cease to be possible or become artificial and purely formal. Progress whether moral or intellectual, can only come about, as everyone knows, through a resolution of contradictions. Conversely where there is too great a difference in cultural levels it may be advisable not to let those elements with over-differing modes of address, backgrounds and interests remain permanently in the group for such heterogeneity may be a serious brake on the normal development of group activity. This is what has happened in fact, in certain club-clubs, whose working-class members have preferred to set up their own group.

## PREPARING THE DISCUSSION: MATERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The actual setting in which a discussion group conducts its work is obviously a matter of importance. Certain persons of a strongly intellectual cast of mind tend to belittle this aspect of adult education. They are wrong; they forget that the orderly and balanced exchange of ideas as can be promoted by certain arrangements and seriously hampered by others. It is still too uncommon for adult education work to be conducted on school or university premises and everyone knows what they are like: crowded rows of benches on which the less able find the professor on his dais. This arrangement is completely unsuitable for the easy development of discussion. Imagine group members in the middle of the class taking part in the discussion. When he speaks neither those in front nor those

behind can see him. At best he can only direct his remarks to another member of the group over the heads of the rest of the group. Usually a one-track dialogue ensues between the individual speaker and the discussion leader on the dais.

No discussion worthy of the name can develop in a setting of this kind. The vital point therefore is to eliminate everything which smacks of the schoolroom. No tiers of benches, no dais, nothing whatever to act as a reminder of the privileged position of any one member of the group, even though he be the discussion leader. On the contrary everything about the material arrangements should imply and reflect the spirit of equality and exchange of ideas which is the essence of this method. The first step is to arrange the seats in a circle or oval, so that everyone can see everyone else. It may be useful to have a table in the centre to put papers on, although this is not essential. Organizers have even been known in their eagerness to create a pleasant setting to put flowers on the table and prepare refreshments for the members (not forgetting the cigarettes).

It is desirable so far as possible to create a relaxed atmosphere by these means so that the members feel at ease and all external causes of tension and nervous fatigue are eliminated. But here again it would be a mistake to strive for the impossible. If the only meeting place available is a classroom the group will be only too happy to be able to use it. But there is nothing to prevent the organizer from stationing himself in the middle of the group instead of sitting on the dais and it will often be possible to rearrange the benches without too much bother.

The leader should also ensure that the group is provided with all working material such as chalk, paper, graphs and the general documentation referred to below.

The same attention should be paid to the non-material side of the arrangement. This is the job of the organizer or the person in charge of arranging a particular meeting. It should take care not to make the plans for the development of the discussion too cut-and-dried, for this would be a sin against the very spirit of the method which needs very free play in order to be fully effective with an avoidance of rote-work or ready-made forms of discussion, and an encouragement of inventiveness and curiosity of mind. At the same time however it will be well to think out, in advance, possible turns of discussion, and the questions that may need to be put in order to get the debate going or keep it alive when it looks as if it might peter out.

## CHOICE AND PRESENTATION OF SUBJECTS

Few subjects are unsuited for discussion, even those most remote from everyday experience or highly specialized in nature often possess one

aspect on which the layman can have an opinion

Take for example a subject which ostensibly seems to be the preserve of a handful of specialists historical sources. At first sight it would seem that very few persons are qualified to express an opinion on this aspect of the historian's work. But is it not extremely important to give as many people as possible an insight into how history books are produced what materials go into their making, and how they are treated and processed? A well presented study of this kind would be bound to arouse keen interest even among adult students who have never asked themselves the question in many words.

The problem however is to link it to the experience and mental processes of the ordinary man. This can be done in all sorts of ways. Everyone knows something about history whether it be the history of his own family village or district or of the twelve years since the end of the war or even his own personal history. On the basis of all these fragments of the past it is possible and exciting to show how an historical record is made. Every member of the group for instance can contribute his own reconstruction of a given period in the recent past or of an event in which all took part. This will give an idea of the range of documentation and personal collective memories which are the ingredients of history. In this way the group through a well conducted discussion will gain an understanding of the making and writing of history and of the relative nature of that branch of learning, as of all others.

There are cases of adult education centres set up to improve living conditions among the rural population in a poorly favoured area where experimentation in the collective study of local history has yielded very striking results in this direction. It helps peasants who have only just emerged from a state of illiteracy to get their bearings in relation to the past and acquire an awareness of possible historical changes a matter of importance when it is a question of galvanizing an old and traditionally static civilization into movement.

Where the subject studied can be linked with a body of knowledge or set of interests explicitly or implicitly shared by the group, there in principle is no reason why certain problems traditionally reserved for a minority of research workers and specialists should not be taken up.

It should not be hastily concluded from this that the choice of subject is a matter of indifference. The purpose of discussion is not to train professional debaters but with as with any other adult education method, to link intellectual progress to improved living conditions and bridge the gap between thought and action. It is important, therefore, to follow certain guiding lines when drawing up study programmes for consideration by groups and especially to

establish a connexion between the subject matter and the members' personal interests. This rule out any subject to which the members are incapable of making a personal contribution on the basis of their experience or of documentary materials: discussions in the abstract are always dangerous and useless.

To avoid the proliferation of subjects. In a given cycle of studies for example it is worth making an effort to concentrate the group's work on a central theme either topical or chosen because of its importance. For there is nothing more harmful to a balanced approach than the dispersal of interest which cultural impressionism produces. A discussion of a central theme such as assistance to underdeveloped countries enables all the resources of the various branches of knowledge biology history geography sociology ethics and politics to be drawn upon, plus the experience of the members.

## LAUNCHING AND DEVELOPING THE DISCUSSION

It is rare for a discussion to go forward by itself and continue smoothly to its end without any outside action being necessary. Usually some assistance is needed in getting it started and keeping it going in the right way. This is the most difficult and important of the leader's tasks. The first few moments of the discussion always represent the critical phase and the value derived from the questions raised and debated depends largely on the tone of the initial contribution. It is essential for the leader to step in whenever he sees that the discussion has made a bad start. Take the case for example where the group is discussing a topical film or book. Some of the more influential members of the group immediately peak up and maintain that the film or book is a good (or bad) one. There is nothing more dangerous than this kind of beginning which may quickly result in the discussion being bogged down. Two clans form within the group those for and those against the book or film and the discussion is soon reduced to conflicting assertions which are all the more intractable for having nothing more solid to rely on than weak arguments and personal feeling.

In such circumstances the leader should not fail to intervene. By putting a few judicious questions he will be able to rescue the discussion from the dead end and steer it in a hopeful direction. He will ask, for example, whether any members have had personal experience or found themselves in situations similar to those described or pictured by the author and this will provide a natural transition to a new phase of discussion, permitting a more free play of opinion.

There are cores of questions that can be put in order to take the discussion beyond the stage of a mere repetition of individual aesthetic viewpoints to

which it is too often confined, such as "What is the author's conception of life? Is it jaundiced pessimistic optimistic? Does he approve or condemn the events he describes? What seems to have been the purpose behind his work? Was it the purely artistic desire to describe and reproduce reality or was he working implicitly or explicitly on behalf of a cause? Has he a conscious mission?"

Then there are such possible questions as the author's sources of inspiration or models or comparisons with other authors in the same country or elsewhere who have treated similar subjects. Another one which might be well worth taking up is the practical usefulness of the work to what type of public it is directed, and what can the different age-groups concerned hope to derive from it?

Purely aesthetic considerations and value-judgements admittedly have their rightful place in the discussion but at the end of the analysis and not at the beginning where they might lead to the adoption of over-dogmatic stands stifling the rest of the debate. There is a common tendency in popular circles (especially among people not yet accustomed to such discussions) to confuse questions of style and content. The mere fact of making participants draw a clear line between these two aspects is its if a substantial contribution towards their education. Questions relating to the forms and the methods used to express the latter nearly always cause serious trouble: the ordinary public are not used to raising them, for they do not regard a film a book or a broad cast as a piece of work on the same footing as one produced by work of craftsmanship. It is therefore essential to make the similarity between both types of creative effort clear to them and so remove the misconception. (The experiment can be tried of asking a popular audience which has just seen a film to sit in the name of its author. Many among them will not even be aware that the main author is the producer. Usually they only remember the names of the leading actors.)

If desired the development of the discussion of film could be tabulated as follows (all the while remembering that the table is merely a practical guide with nothing mandatory about it and that it has to be adapted to concrete cases).

1. Did the group members like or dislike the film? (A vote could be taken by show of hands)
2. For what reasons?
  - (a) Reasons of content (interesting or dull plot, sympathetic or unsympathetic characters, reality or poorly portrayed etc.) Get the group to distinguish between points relating to:
    - the plot
    - the characters
    - the documentary value
  - Find out whether the group members have a personal knowledge of similar facts or events
  - (b) Reasons of form

pace of the film,  
quality of the dialogue  
quality of the acting,  
quality of the production,  
quality of the stage craft  
quality of the photography  
quality of the setting  
quality of the costumes  
quality of the music etc

3. What was the author's intention in creating this work?
4. Was his intention fulfilled?  
If so how?  
If not why?
5. What conclusions can we draw from the spectacle we have just seen as regards our own life and the attitudes of the groups and environments in which we live?
6. An attempt might be made finally to recall other works (films books broadcasts) on the same subject or supplementing the information transmitted by the film just discussed
7. In some cases it can be checked whether the discussion has brought about change in the group's attitude towards the film, by helping them to understand it (another vote for instance being taken at the end of the discussion)

An important point, in this connexion is that where voting is considered useful the vote should be taken quickly and the questions clearly stated. Where a single issue is voted on, all that need be done is to count the votes for and against and the abstentions. Alternatively an attempt could be made to qualify the work according to its merits in which case a verbal evaluation scale is better than the mere allocation of marks. Since it is more specific the scale could consist of the following five grades:

Excellent  
Good  
Average  
Poor  
Very poor

Where a vote is taken in accordance with this scale of values the latter must be clearly explained beforehand. Not too much time should be spent on voting for its sole purpose is to give a rapid indication of the general feeling. It is inadvisable to have the group vote more than once or twice at each meeting.

It is important finally that the questions should always be put in a stimulating manner. In general questions which can only be answered by a simple "yes" or "no" should be avoided. If the subject of friendship comes up for example question like "Is it a good thing to have friends?" can hardly lead very far. It is not conducive to discussion, and the answer to it needs no pondering. It is quite otherwise with question like "What are the signs of true friendship?" or "How does one recognize that man is really one's friend?" This is something on which opinions and experience



can differ from the outset and a lively discussion can ensue shedding more light on the essence of friendship and how to distinguish true friends from false

The organizer's actions throughout the discussion will be the natural continuation of what he does at the initial stage. He will see to it that the debate proceeds smoothly and will try by his own attitude to maintain relaxed and genial atmosphere. Above all, he will pay attention, and listen rather than speak. His main qualification, in fact resides in his attentiveness for it is on the intensity and quality of the attention he pays to each participant that his educational influence in the final analysis depends. Each individual needs to feel that he "matters" that his thoughts and judgements count that he means something to the world of which he is. In one form or another conscious. The organizer must lend not only his ears but also his mind to every single contribution made by every single member even if the contribution is only of marginal interest. Therein lies his greatest service. It is on the attitude of active respect and understanding which he adopts towards the personality of each participant that the group's collective attitude will largely be modelled.

He must also ensure that contact between the various elements making up the group remains unbroken. For example he must see to it that the thoughts expressed are understood by all. Not everyone is capable of precise and lucid expression, nor have words the same meaning and connotation for each speaker. The organizer must satisfy himself every so often that there is no mis-understanding or confusion. If necessary he must intervene to ask for clarifications or possibly definitions in order to clear up a point. It will be very helpful to the group when a muddled statement has been made or the discussion has been tortuous or obscure. If he tries to sum up the argument, for this will greatly assist the group in following the sequence of ideas.

It is also useful to halt the discussion from time to time in order to sum up the stage reached in the group deliberations. This periodical "re-statement" enables the subjects covered to be docketed, the main arguments recapitulated (those which are merely repetitive being eliminated) and the main viewpoints clearly enunciated. Occasionally where the subject-matter and the composition of the group permit, the broad lines of the recapitulation can be recorded on the blackboard.

At the end of the discussion provided the group is not too tired it will likewise be valuable to recapitulate the general lines of the debate as a whole and the points of agreement and disagreement. It will often be a good idea to close the discussion before the subject has been completely exhausted and the members being weary find nothing more to say. Whether this should be done depends of course on the subject

itself but it may be all to the good if the members continue the discussion informally between themselves e.g. on the way home.

## PROVIDING MATERIAL FOR THE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTATION THE EXPERT

While every subject as stated, is fit matter for discussion (at least so far as one or more of its aspects are concerned) this is not to say that all members of the group are equally ready to take an active part in discussing it. It may very well be that the group in general is anxious to discuss a question, without being sufficiently familiar with it. An empty discussion is worse than none at all. We all have experience of those abstract discussions where the fact that the speakers know practically nothing about the subject makes them all the more dogmatic. It is as usual, therefore to fill in the individual and collective gaps in the group members' knowledge by providing abundant and regular sources of information.

There are any number of these and it only needs an exercise of pedagogical sense on the part of the programme organizer (as well as imagination) and this applies to every single group member also) to find a whole host of them. The simplest methods are often the best. In many countries, for example there is nothing to stop anyone compiling adequate documentation on events relating to the country's political, cultural, social and economic life by assembling cuttings from the daily and weekly press on subjects scheduled for group discussion. Press material can also be used for countless exercises designed to cultivate the group's critical sense. Nothing could be more demonstrative of the relativity of history and historical truth for instance than comparing different newspaper articles and reports on any given incident from a drunken brawl to the Government's proposed financial measures. The different ways in which the same event can be interpreted, reported on as an object lesson to the group in the exercise of careful judgement, the cardinal virtue of the critical mind.

Apart from documentation, which everyone can collect for his own use the services of experts can be called upon.

The importance of protecting the group against dominant personalities has been repeatedly stressed. This does not mean that the resources of the various participants should not be used to the group's best advantage. The expert by definition, has a *first hand knowledge* due to his specialized trade or studies of points which it is useful for the group to know and discuss and his information and comments are obviously of major interest for the debate. However the place he occupies in the group must be very carefully watched. The great danger is that instead of discussion involving all members of the group

one track dialogues will ensue between the expert and each member in turn in the form of questions and answers hence the organiser must be vigilant and keep the expert in his proper place as a stand by to be called upon in case of need, and not as a source of instruction

There are two points to be made here Firstly the expert's intervention can take many different forms It could be an introductory statement followed by a set of questions or more simply an explanation, clarification or suggestion interposed during the discussion what is felt to be a suitable juncture Secondly expertise is not a substantive quality attached to a person for all time Everyone can be an expert in his own way at a given moment For the needs of a group's discussion, one of its members can temporarily serve as the required expert, after having been given the task, say of preparing a special background study of a problem after doing appropriate reading or research on it, or again, after collecting the relevant documentation Alternatively an outside personality with a special knowledge of the subject to be discussed can be invited to take part in one or more of the meetings However the expert's appearance should not be too fleeting everyone must have a chance of speaking to him and asking him questions and if possible he must have time to attend several meetings and share in group life

## REFERENCE BOOKS

The group must be provided with easily accessible reference books on the theme for discussion Apart from specialised works on each subject, it would scarcely be possible to do without such instruments as dictionaries (to check a date, a biographical reference or the meaning of a word or expression) atlases (both geographical and historical) and statistical material Where the group possesses the stability and continuity mentioned earlier as being so important, it will find it of the utmost value to equip itself with a library (permanent or temporary) containing the main works to which it will have to refer during its study cycle

The part played in adult education in general by such powerful teaching instruments and aids as the film and radio and television broadcasts has been dealt with in detail in an earlier chapter and the reader is referred back to it The only point involved here is the notable contribution made by

these media in getting the discussion going and in illustrating certain aspects of it as it proceeds; it will be useful if the group has handy access to catalogues of films and filmstrips and to programmes of radio and television broadcasts which might serve as an aid in its work

## A GUIDE TO ACTION

The purpose of discussion is not only to shed light on a problem or a situation, but also to assist the group and its members in taking the necessary decisions with a view to concrete action It is only when the group decides to undertake a given action that it becomes fully aware of its group character and conscious of its real strength, and the adoption of such decisions is an essential factor in its growing up process It is through them that it exercises its strongest and most marked educational effect on each of its members

The opportunities for taking joint decisions are frequent They may be concerned with questions of procedure: the selection of subjects for discussion, the order of programme priorities or the choice and use of experts during discussions All these decisions should be taken in common as the collective result of individual discussions In this way through the constant practice of reaching collective decisions the group prepares itself for more extensive actions having bearing on its place and rôle in the community in general Thus the normal culmination of the work of a discussion group in a rural community may be a joint decision concerning changes in farming methods or the introduction of new crops or educational arrangements for the children. The aim of adult education and this is the point that must never be forgotten is to bring about change in the attitudes and behaviours

of the group as such  
of its individual members, both in their own lives and in the life of the community and society to which they belong and  
of the milieux exposed to the action of the individual members and of the group as a whole

How far discussion plays its due part as the supreme method of adult education will depend on the closeness of the links established, both inside and out of the group, between its studies and the decisions it is led to take

## CHECKING OF RESULTS

As already stated, adult education, directed as it is towards men and women who in their adult capacity carry out a whole host of functions, has to try to produce integrated personalities in both the individual and the social sense and one of the educator's tasks will be to see how far this has been done. The higher and longer the range set the more difficult will it be exactly to ascertain and measure the results achieved. In the case of instruction pure and simple, examinations may be regarded as a more or less reliable test of whether knowledge has really been imparted; once the examination technique has been suitably refined and adapted to prevent freak results (good pupil made tongue-tied by emotion, backward pupil who manages to copy from his neighbour). But with education proper and especially adult education with its aim of producing integrated personalities alive in all possible fields, the checking of results is more problematical. But checked they must be: if the educator is not to work in the dark and the methods used are to be properly tested. In some countries adult education arrangements do indeed provide for examinations, but this method would be ineffective in the majority of cases: adults find it distasteful to be back in the schoolroom, which has not always left them with happy memories. Nor do examinations give any indication of the progress made in leisure-time activities, whose part in adult education, as shown earlier, is becoming increasingly prominent. They do not indicate whether the student has become more active citizen in closer integration with the community in which he lives and works.

## NEED FOR SCIENTIFIC CONTROL

This explains why the adult education expert wishing to get a clearer idea of the way forward measure the progress made and gauge the effectiveness of his instruments needs to apply control methods which yield more sensitive and scientifically reliable results. These he must get from psychology and sociology, sciences which developed simultaneously with adult education work. Tests, sampling, questionnaires and other instruments used in the psychological study of adult education will all help him to get to know his field, verify his progress and evaluate the results obtained.

Usually in adult education groups the organisers and the members use empirical methods to establish how their work is progressing. Their first criterion is regularity of attendance at the courses and meetings; attendance figures help the organiser to gauge the success or failure of his work, and from them he will determine what interests the public and what is worth while. The two expressions are far from synonymous for accounts to be taken not only of what the members are interested in but of what is calculated to enrich and uplift them. However, attendance depends on many factors outside the life and even the activities of the group and in this respect the statistic tells us nothing about the attitudes and behaviour of the members. The empirical check which the organiser and the group can make on the result of their work can provide no more than partial and often uncertain data, difficult to interpret. An individual group may of course find such information sufficient, especially where the organiser has enough pedagogical sense to interpret it properly, but it is often found and particularly with bodies at the regional or national level is where decisions have to be taken involving long-term commitments for educational movements, services with widespread local ramifications that it is becoming increasingly advisable to have more detailed and reliable information, apart from which the pressing value of teaching scientifically based data may be very useful to those trying to convince high officials of the need for making an effort on behalf of adult education.

The necessity or at very least the extreme usefulness of more scientific check on results in adult education implies as a corollary that there must be consultation and collaboration between educators and psycho-sociological experts. The latter employ methods which are being steadily perfected by continuous research and experimentation work, while the former contribute their empirical knowledge of a vast field now being thrown open to scientific exploration. Both parties stand to gain by coming together. Science in fact is not only concerned with knowing the real world; it is also interested in checking its hypotheses by experimentation. It creates conditions and circumstances experimentally and supplements its observations of the real world by studying the resultant effects. However, the changes produced must not be arbitrary: in this case science is working not on inert matter, on

guinea pigs but on living men, and the experiments should be in line with the educational purpose to promote development of the personality of the individual and his integration into his environment or environments. The psycho-sociological study of adult education which should primarily relate to leisure-time activity in view of the latter growing importance as part of that education should logically result in developing those activities in new forms. The very work of organizing adult education and especially leisure-time activities if conducted according to the rules of scientific observation, is a first rate field for experiment; conversely the investigator's experimental urge will produce a further expansion of activity at the educational level.

Since it is a question of measuring not only the increase in the student's knowledge but also the change in his attitudes a serious check on results should take account of the nature of those attitudes and order itself accordingly. An attitude is something more than an opinion held, and concerns other aspects of the personality; it may be more or less unconscious and indirect methods may often have to be used to track it down. Far from being fixed once and for all, it is something which develops; and it is its development peacefully which educational work seeks to achieve. Hence the checking process must be capable of registering that development and recording its various stages. In other words it must be dynamic and not static. Here again, the student will not always be aware of the changes taking place within him and the instrument used (e.g. the questionnaire) must help him to become clear on the various aspects of those changes. In the case of the study by J. Dumazedier and his team on the effect of television broadcasts on countryfolk in France referred to earlier the questions included not only "What programmes do you like most or least?" but also "Are there any programmes which you liked at the beginning and have now ceased to like or like less than you did?" and "Are there any programmes which you did not like at the beginning but which you now like?" Nor is it sufficient to bring out average attitudes: True these may have scientific value but it would be wrong to expect more from quantitative figures and studies than they can reasonably provide. Allowance must be made for the rate of development of attitudes in the milieu studied; the peasantry for example usually develop at a lower rate than townfolk. Average attitudes when re-examined after a certain time may fail to show any change; whereas certain isolated changes not reflected in the averages because of their rarity may in fact be highly significant in the light of what is known of the standing and rôle in the given community of those displaying these new attitudes and behaviour patterns. It follows that the instrument used for checking must be flexible enough to indicate the prospective importance of these innovating

attitudes which elude a quantitative study because there are a few of them; it should be possible to supplement the latter type of study by qualitative ones describing and interpreting the facts which the investigator considers significant.

## METHODS OF CHECKING

To enable the sociologist to study the changes in attitudes and behaviour patterns brought about by educational work, the educator must give him information of the maximum accuracy concerning his own objectives and the results he considers he has achieved, according to his empirical assessment of the facts. The sociologist, on the strength of these data, which he interprets in the light of his previous scientific experience is then able to formulate his working hypotheses as the basis for experiment. The experimental method, as indicated earlier, should play a big part in the checking of results and supplement the observation of facts as they occur in unprovoked situations. It is important however that the experiment should take place under normal arrangements in a setting possessing all the characteristics of an adult education group working without any sociological considerations in view. An experiment conducted under more hermetic conditions with the subjects more completely isolated from any influence other than that of the factor whose effect is to be studied and measured (special broadcasts for the rural population by Radiodiffusion Télévision Française in the example chosen) would no doubt produce clearer results but would be less authentic and give a poorer idea of the concrete conditions under which adult education proceeds. It is obvious also that experiments of this kind cannot be conducted by educators on their own, in the course of their normal work of checking results but require the formation of combined teams of sociologists and educators possibly reinforced by psychologists, ethnographers, historians etc. depending on the scope and purpose of the survey. In other words a distinction must be made in evaluating results between large-scale surveys conducted with the aid of a whole battery of scientific equipment and yielding reliable information having general validity and the regular day-to-day work made by educators familiar with sociological methods (during particular study courses for example) the educators conduct the checking themselves with the indirect assistance of sociologists but the results will be less comprehensive and reliable. These two forms of collaboration between educators and sociologists (the former also serving of course as assistant in the large-scale surveys) should be carefully distinguished from each other so that the educator absorbed by his part is not put off by the size of the effort

of material which a large scale investigation of his limited efforts in a small institution would involve. The game would hardly be worth the candle. On the other hand it is essential that he should be made aware of the great services he can derive for his own work from large-scale surveys in many fields and that he be prepared to as his in them.

But whether it be a question of making a large scale survey or of checking the day-to-day activity of a small group, the person or team responsible for it must first study the ground on which the experiment is to be conducted. This preliminary exploration will usually result in the preparation of a primary survey instrument covering all the main heads (location, demographic data, occupation, age, sex, standard of education, living standard etc.) which define the group's environmental conditions. This instrument like all the rest should be prepared by the educators and sociologists together and at least submitted to the latter for review. The next step is to choose the method or methods to be applied for obtaining the desired information concerning the results of the adult education activities in question. One must be made of example of the subjective method of interviewing or the objective method of observation, but it will often be useful to combine the two. A choice must also be made of the form of the questions to be put: direct or indirect, closed (i.e. only allowing of clear-cut answers "Yes" "No" etc.) or open (requiring a more elaborate mental effort by the respondent). Only rarely will it be possible in checking adult education results to use the method of examinations which are primarily designed to indicate aptitude rather than changes in attitude. For this latter purpose special instruments need to be devised such as questionnaires and log books or observation notebooks again in concert with the sociologists and subject to their approval. The questionnaires can be submitted to them once only at suitable intervals depending on the investigation methods chosen. In the latter case it will be possible by comparing the answers to discover changes in attitude. The log books will provide a detailed picture of the development of group meetings and of the content of discussions (as far as possible in the direct speech used by the participants). A useful study might be made of the development of a member's vocabulary after joining the group) and might include standard questions to be put at each meeting in a particular series (e.g. where several lectures are given on the same subject or by the same lecturer; in how many of the activities of the various meetings included comparable elements). These instruments could be supplemented by analytical descriptions of certain phenomena not covered by the questionnaires or log books because of their isolation or remoteness from the problems which those instruments are designed and expected to cover such as the changes in a particular individual behaviour

outside the group (in his relations with his family, his work or other groups) where the recording of those facts is not specially provided for under the various headings of the survey and the observation instruments initially provided.

Intensive and comprehensive surveys of this kind will not of course absolve the group and its organisers from their normal duty of compiling statistics on figures and trends in the matter of attendance at group meetings, the composition of the group membership, the social origins of the group organisers (where there are several of them) and so on. Far from conflicting with previous recordings of a more or less empirical nature, the systematic checking of results corrects and supplements them and is in fact always dependent on them for an accurate interpretation of its results. If for example country folk were asked in a questionnaire to state what would be the first thing they would like their mayor to spend money on, were the commune suddenly to find itself in funds (1) and if their replies assigned one of the lowest priorities to religious edifices only empirical knowledge will tell us whether these replies indicate that those buildings are in perfect condition or alternatively that local religious feeling are not very strong. The sociologist will always need the educator with his familiarity with the special features of the ground to be studied, in order to ensure that the quantitative results given by his instruments are placed in proper perspective and focus.

## GROUP PARTICIPATION IN CHECKING

Obviously it is impossible to check the results obtained by the group without the latter's conscious and active participation. The checking process is thus able to serve a direct and dual pedagogical purpose: first, to enhance and broaden the organization's qualifications and then to help the group and its members to acquire a deeper self-knowledge and operate more effectively in consequence both as integrated members of society who spend most of their life outside the group, and as members of the group itself. The members are entitled to know the rules of the

- (1) A question on these lines was included in the questionnaire used for the investigation on television and adult education. Its purpose was to acquaint the investigators with the order of priority of requirements of group members (members of tele clubs in this case) as regards public equipment, question forming part of the wider one of the villager's attitude towards the modernization of public amenities. The idea was to promote the latter by means of special projects to assess their effect on the villager's attitude on the subject then being studied by the investigators.

game they are being asked to join in, although this does not mean of course that the organiser should not present the study or survey to them in terms suited to their actual level. They will readily see the point of being asked their detailed views on past programmes for the purpose of preparing future ones. However it will always be necessary to take account of the climate peculiar to the individual group: in one case note-taking or tape-recording during the discussion will not disturb the proceedings in any way whereas in another the liveliness and spontaneity of the contributions will greatly suffer. It is up to the organiser to know the climate in his own group and where necessary to try out forms of participation which the members can suitably be asked to adopt.

Far from hampering group activities the checking of results including preliminary survey of conditions in the surrounding milieu, with special emphasis on changes produced in it by those activities should actually feature as one of them. There are cases on record of adult education centres where the most advanced of the regulars sometimes exhort every one of them to have gone on, after a few years to set up independent groups which remotely controlled by the director of the centre make their own study of their milieu and the changes brought about. It is still necessary in it elsewhere the checking of results will at least have the effect of mobilising team of aspirants around the central organizer.

## CHECKING OF RESULTS AS A MORAL NECESSITY

Thus the checking of results from its most modest forms where the group does its best to evaluate its work through self-observation, up to the form of the large-scale experimental survey fulfils a dual rôle. It enables the sociologist to enter a new field of study where he has the assistance of active and devoted organisers and a sympathetic public and will be able to perfect new methods and techniques while it enables the educator to answer some of the questions which adult education is bound to ask concerning the value of its work and methods and makes it possible for him, in many cases to advance beyond the stage of approximation and intuition and reach solid ground. Where a study proves (like that recently made in India, referred to above) that radio broadcasts on questions of farming technique or health have a very definite effect when collective listening is followed by discussion whereas the effect is almost nil where there is no discussion, the latter's value in the context in which the experiment took place can no longer be disputed. Educators many of whom devote their free time to adult education voluntarily and without payment, have the right to know whether their devotion serves a useful purpose. The checking of results in adult education is useful to the group and its organiser but in special sense it is also a moral necessity.

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